The Shorter Bible

THE OLD TESTAMENT

TRANSLATED AND ARRANGED
BY
CHARLES FOSTER KENT
WOOLSEY PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IN YALE UNIVERSITY

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF
CHARLES CUTLER TORREY
PROFESSOR OF SEMITIC LANGUAGES IN YALE UNIVERSITY
HENRY A. SHERMAN
HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE OF CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
FREDERICK HARRIS
SENIOR SECRETARY OF THE PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
ETHEL CUTLER
RELIGIOUS WORK SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL BOARD OF THE YOUNG WOMENS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

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PREFACE

The SHORTER BIBLE is not intended as a substitute for the complete text or the time-honored versions. It aims rather, through the selection of certain parts which have seemed to the editors especially well suited to this purpose, to kindle the interest of the busy modern reader in the Bible as a whole.

In the Bible, accounts of the same events or teachings are frequently repeated. The Book of Genesis alone contains between thirty and forty such repetitions. Seven-eighths of Mark is quoted in Matthew and three-fourths in Luke. The reader is often confused by these different versions of the same incidents and teachings. It is quite natural that Paul, even with his astounding versatility, should repeat certain teachings in his letters. About one-third of the Old Testament and about two-thirds of the New represent what is most frequently read or used by the average Bible student.

The effort is made in the SHORTER BIBLE, by omitting these duplicates, by bringing together kindred parts, and by arranging the material in each group according to the nature of its contents or in the order in which it is written, to secure a clearer picture of the origin and development of Judaism and Christianity

and of the work and teachings of their great social and spiritual leaders.

In the translation the aim has been to translate the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek idioms into their modern English equivalents—that is, to make it literal rather than literalistic, and to present the thought of the Biblical writers so simply that it can be easily understood by all. The editors desire to express their deep sense of indebtedness to the many scholars who have prepared the way and to the host of devoted friends who have generously aided in this work.

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THE OLD TESTAMENT

CONTENTS

STORIES AND HISTORIES

GENESIS

THE PRIMITIVE NARRATIVES

SECTION PAGE

1. The Poem of Creation, Gen. 1^{1}–2^{3} 1
2. The Provisions for Man's Physical, Moral, and Social Development, $2^{4a-8a, 9, 15-24}$ 4
3. Sin and Its Tragic Consequences, 2^{25}–$3^{19, 23, 24}$ . . 5
4. Cain the Criminal, 3^{20}, 4^{1-16a} 7
5. The Survival of the Morally Fit, $6^{5-7a, c, 8, 13-17}$, $7^{1-5, 6b-8, 12, 16b, 18, 22, 23}$, $8^{1-3a, 6-12, 13b, 18, 20, 21b-22}$ 9
6. The Rainbow of Promise, 9^{1-15} 11
7. The Traditional Origin of Nations and Languages, 11^{1-9} 12

THE ABRAHAM NARRATIVES

8. An Unselfish Pioneer, 9^{18a}, $11^{27b-29b, 30b, 31, 32b}$, 12^{1-8}, $13^{2, 5-18}$ 14
9. Hospitality to Strangers, $18^{1-11a, 12-14}$ 16
10. The Destruction of the Morally Unfit, $18^{16, 20-32}$, $19^{1-23, 30, 37, 38}$ 17
11. Jehovah's Sympathy for Outcasts, $21^{1-3, 6, 8-21}$ . . 20
12. Abraham's Loyalty to His Divine Friend, 22^{1-19} . 22
13. The Mission of Abraham's Devoted Servant, 24^{1-61}, $25^{5, 8, 11b}$, 24^{62b-67} 23

THE JACOB–ESAU NARRATIVES

SECTION PAGE

14. Jacob's Trickery in the Home, $25^{21a, b, 24-34}$ 29
15. His Unscrupulous Ambition, 27^{1-40} 29
16. The Dream of a Troubled Fugitive, 27^{41-45}, $28^{10-13, 15-22}$ 33
17. The Deceiver Deceived, 29, $30^{1, 22-24}$ 34
18. Trickery That Again Made Jacob a Fugitive, 30^{25-43}, $31^{1, 2, 17, 18a, 19-21}$ 37
19. Facing the Misdeeds of Youth, $32^{3-11, 13b-32}$ . . . 39
20. The Reconciliation of Two Brothers, 33^{1-16}, $35^{1, 6, 16-20}$ 41

THE JOSEPH NARRATIVES

21. The Victim of Favoritism, $37^{1, 2b-27, 28b, 31-35}$ . . . 43
22. Joseph's Fidelity to His Ideals, 39^{1-22} 45
23. His Readiness to Help Those in Trouble, 40 . . . 47
24. His Great Opportunity, 41^{1-36} 49
25. The Office Finds the Man, 41^{37-57} 51
26. The Testing of Joseph's Brother, $42^{1-26, 29-38}$ . . . 53
27. The Moral Awakening of Joseph's Family, 43^{1}–44^{13} 55
28. Judah's Appeal for Clemency, 44^{14-34} 59
29. Joseph's Magnanimity, 45 61
30. Joseph's Loyalty to His Family, $46^{1-5, 28-34}$, $47^{1-12, 27}$ 63
31. The End of Jacob's Tempestuous Life, 47^{29-31}, $48^{2b, 9b, 13-21}$, 49^{33b}–50^{14} 65
32. Joseph's Last Days, 50^{15-26} 67

EXODUS

THE DELIVERANCE OF THE HEBREWS FROM EGYPT

33. Moses' Training as an Industrial and Religious *Leader, Ex.* $1^{6-14a, 22}$, 2^{1-22} 69

SECTION PAGE

34. His Call to Public Service, 2^{23}, $3^{1-3a, 9-14, 16, 17a, c, 18-20}$, $4^{10-16a, 18}$ 71

35. Pharaoh's Pitiless Industrial Oppression, $4^{27-30a, 31}$, 5^{1}–6^{1} 73

36. Penalties for Industrial Oppression, $7^{14, 15a, 16-18, 20b, 21a, 24, 25}$, $8^{1-6, 8-15, 20-25a, 28b-32}$, 9^{1-7} 76

37. The Blighting Effects of Oppression, $9^{13, 17, 18, 23b-30, 33, 34}$, $10^{3-5, 11b, 13-20}$ 79

38. The Plagues that Broke Pharaoh's Spirit, 10^{21-29}, 11^{4-8} 81

39. The Institution of the Passover Feast, $12^{1-9a, 10-16, 21-24, 26-28}$ 82

40. Israel's Deliverance from Egyptian Despotism, $12^{29-34, 37-39}$, 13^{17-22}, $14^{5-8, 10-14, 19-21c, 23-28, 30, 31}$ . . 84

41. Song of Thanksgiving, $15^{20, 21, 1-11b}$ 87

THE HEBREWS IN THE WILDERNESS

42. The Solemn Compact Between the Hebrews and Their God, $15^{22a, 27}$, 16^{1a}, 17^{1b}, $19^{2-6a, 7-11, 16-18}$, 20^{1-17}, 34^{27} 89

43. The Construction of the Tent of Meeting, $25^{1, 8}$, 35^{21}, $36^{2, 3a, 8a}$, 33^{7-11} 91

44. The Beginning of Law and Judicial Organization, $18^{1, 5, 7-9, 12-27}$ 92

45. The School of Hardship, $16^{2-7, 13-15, 21, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35a}$, 17^{2-7} 94

NUMBERS

THE QUEST FOR A HOME

46. The Selection of Religious Leaders, Num. 6^{22-25}, $11^{16, 17, 24b-29}$ 97

47. The Conflicting Reports of the Hebrew Spies, $13^{17-20, 22-24, 26b-33}$, $14^{1b, 3-9}$, Deut. 1^{22} 98

SECTION PAGE

48. The Penalty for the People's Lack of Faith, $14^{11-24, 31-33a}$ 100

49. The Advance Toward the East-Jordan, 20^{14-22a}, $21^{4b-9, 11b-13, 16-18c}$ 101

50. The Victories Over the Amorites, $21^{21-29, 31}$, 32^{39-41} . 103

51. Balaam's Obligation to Tell the Truth, $22^{3b-7, 17, 18, 21b-35}$ 104

52. An Early Ideal of National Glory, 22^{36-39a}, 23^{28}, 24^{1-19} 106

53. The Loyalty of the East-Jordan Tribes, $32^{1, 2, 5-8, 16-27}$ 108

DEUTERONOMY

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A STABLE NATIONAL LIFE

54. The Meaning of Israel's Experiences, Deut. 1^{1a}, $8^{2-15, 17-20}$, $28^{1, 3-13}$, 11^{10-12} 110

55. Moses' Final Charge to His People, 31^{1-8}, 34^{1-10} . . 113

JOSHUA

THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN

56. Joshua's Preparations for the Conquest of Jericho, Josh. $1^{1, 2, 5-7, 9-11}$, $2^{1-7, 16, 8-24}$ 115

57. The Crossing of the Jordan, $3^{1, 5, 9b, 10b, 11, 12-17}$, $4^{1, 3, 6-8, 18b}$ 117

58. The Capture of Jericho, $6^{1-3, 5c, 7, 10b, 11, 14-17, 20a, c, 21, 25}$ 119

JUDGES

THE PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT

59. The Victory That Gave the Hebrews Independence, Judg. $1^{16a, 19, 23-25, 27, 29-32}$, $3^{5a, 6, 13-15a}$, $4^{1, 3b-16}$ . . 121

60. *Israel's Battle* Hymn of Freedom, $5^{1, 2, 4-7, 9-13, 14c-31b}$ 123

SECTION PAGE

61. The Origin of the First Hebrew State, $6^{2, 3a, 4b, 5a, 6, 11-24, 34, 35}$, 7^{2-8a}, $8^{4-10a, 11}$, 7^{16-21}, $8^{12-27a, 30-32}$ 126

62. Effects of a Rule Founded on Violence, $9^{1-23, 25-28a, 29, 39, 40, 45, 50-56}$ 131

63. Jephthah's Fatal Vow, $11^{1a, 3-11a, 30-32, 34-40}$ 134

64. Samson's Marriage Feast, $13^{2-5a, 24}$, $14^{1-3, 5-20}$ . . . 136

65. Doing to Others as They Do to You, 15^{1-16} . . . 138

66. A Physical Giant and a Moral Weakling, 16^{4-31a} . 140

67. In the Days when Everyone Did as He Pleased, $17^{1, 2a, 3b, 2b, 4-7a, 8-13}$, $18^{1b, 2-9, 11, 13-31a}$ 143

RUTH

A HEBREW IDYL

68. Naomi's Fortitude and Ruth's Devotion, Ruth 1 . 147

69. In the Fields of Boaz, 2 148

70. The Reward of Fortitude and Devotion, 3 151

I SAMUEL

THE FOUNDING OF THE HEBREW COMMONWEALTH

71. A Mother's Prayers, I Sam. $1^{1a, 2-28a}$, 2^{1-10} 155

72. Samuel's Boyhood Training, $2^{11, 18-21, 12, 17b, 22a, 23-25c, 26}$, $3^{1-13, 15-19}$ 158

73. The Need of a National Deliverer, $4^{1b-4a, 5-7, 9b-10, 12-14, 16-18a}$, $5^{2-4, 6-11a}$, $6^{2-5, 7-10a, 12-14, 16, 21}$, 7^{1} 160

74. The Perils Inherent in the Centralized Form of Government, $8^{1, 3-7, 9-22a}$ 164

75. The Selection of Saul as Ruler, $9^{1a, c, 2-8, 10-27}$, $10^{1-7, 9, 14-16}$ 165

76. The Election of a Democratic Ruler, $11^{1-7, 9-11, 15}$. 169

77. Jonathan's Decisive Victory, $13^{2, 3a, 4-7a, 15b-18, 23}$, $14^{1, 2, 3b-15}$ 170

78. *Saul's Rash Vow*, $14^{16-30, 36-46}$ 172

THE RISE OF DAVID AND THE DECLINE OF SAUL

SECTION PAGE

79. David's Introduction to Public Life, $14^{47, 48, 52}$, 16^{14-23} 176

80. His Victory Over the Philistine Champion, $17^{1-11, 32-40, 42-49, 51, 52}$ 177

81. Saul's Jealousy of David, $18^{6-9, 12a, 13-16, 20, 21a, 22-25b, 27a, c, 28, 29}$, $19^{1, 4-17}$ 179

82. Jonathan's Devotion to David, $20^{1b-10, 12-39, 42b}$ . . . 182

83. The Fatal Effects of a Lie, $21^{1-4a, 6-9}$, $22^{1, 2, 6-18, 20-23}$ 185

84. David's Magnanimity Toward Saul, 23^{1-14a}, 26 . . 188

85. Abigail's Wise Counsel, 25^{1b-42} 191

86. David Among the Philistines, $27^{1-10, 12}$, $28^{1, 2}$, 29, $30^{1, 2, 4, 6, 9a, 11, 13-19a, 20, 21a, 22-26}$ 195

87. Saul's Visit to the Medium of Endor, $28^{3-16, 17b, 19b-25}$ 199

88. The Defeat and Death of a Brave Warrior, 31 . . . 201

II SAMUEL

DAVID'S LEADERSHIP OF THE HEBREWS

89. David's Lament Over Saul and Jonathan, II Sam. $1^{1-4, 11, 12, 17, 19-27}$ 203

90. David's Call to Leadership, $2^{1-9, 10b}$, 3^{1}, $4^{5, 6b}$, 5^{1-5} . 204

91. The Struggle for Independence, 5^{17}, 23^{13-17}, $5^{18-20a, 22-25, 6, 7a, 9-12}$ 206

92. Jerusalem Made the Holy City, $6^{1-7, 9-15, 17-19}$, $7^{4b, 8, 9, 12, 14-16}$ 207

93. David's Treatment of Jonathan's Son, 9 209

94. David's Foreign Conquests, $8^{2, 14a}$, 10^{1-14}, 11^{1}, 12^{26-31b}. 210

95. His Double Crime, $11^{2-22, 25-27a}$ 212

96. *Nathan's* Condemnation of David's Crimes, 11^{27b}, $12^{1-10, 13-24a, c}$ 214

SECTION PAGE

97. Absalom's Rebellion, $15^{1-7, 9-15, 17-26, 29, 30}$, $17^{22b, 24a}$. 217

98. The Defeat and Death of Absalom, 17^{24b}, $18^{1-14, 21, 24a, 31, 32}$, 19^{1-5} 219

I KINGS

SOLOMON'S AUTOCRATIC RULE

99. Solomon's Election as Ruler, I Kings $1^{1a, 5-18, 20-41a, 49-53}$, $2^{10, 12}$ 222

100. Solomon's Wisdom, $3^{4-6a, 7, 9-12a 13a, 15a, 16-28}$ . . . 225

101. The Building of Solomon's Temple, $6^{1b, 2-8, 10, 9, 15-20a, 23a, 26, 23b-24, 27, 28}$ 227

102. The Dedication of the Temple, $8^{1a, c, 2a, 3, 4a, 10-13, 22-24a, 27-30, 37-43}$ 228

103. The Wasteful Splendor of Solomon's Rule, $7^{1, 7-11}$, 9^{26-28}, $10^{11, 12, 26}$, 4^{7}, 10^{1-10} 230

104. The Consequences of His Selfish Policy, $11^{1a, 3, 4a, 7, 23, 24a, c, 25a, 26-32a, 40}$ 232

THE PROBLEMS AND PROPHETS OF THE NORTHERN STATE

105. Israel's Revolt Against Autocracy, 11^{43}, $12^{2, 1, 3b-15a, 16-20}$ 234

106. The Protest and Exile of Elijah the Tishbite, $16^{23, 24, 28, 30, 31b, 32}$, 17 235

107. The Choice Between Material and Spiritual Ideals, $18^{1-12, 15-46}$ 238

108. Elijah's Clearer Vision of God's Nature and Methods, $19^{1-8, 11b-21}$ 241

109. His Defense of the Rights of the People, $21^{1-20a, 23, 27}$ 243

110. The Overthrow of an Unscrupulous Aggressor, $20^{1-21, 23-40}$ 245

111. *Micaiah*'s Loyalty to His Convictions, $22^{1-28a, 29, 30a, 34-37}$ 248

II KINGS

ELISHA THE PASTOR AND COUNSELLOR OF THE PEOPLE

SECTION PAGE

112. The Mantle of Elijah, II Kings 2^{1-13a} 252

113. The Restoration of the Shunamite's Son, 4^{8-37} . . 253

114. The Healing of Naaman, $5^{1-17, 19-27}$ 255

115. Elisha's Vision of the Spirit Helpers, 6^{8-23} 258

116. The Deliverance of Samaria, $6^{24-30, 32a, 33}$, 7^{1-16} . . 260

THE BLOODY STRUGGLE WITH TYRANNY AND HEATHENISM

117. The Overthrow of the House of Ahab, $9^{1-6, 10b-16a, 17-21a, c, 22a, 23a, 24-26, 30-37}$ 263

118. The Overthrow of Tyranny and Heathenism in Judah, $8^{25, 29b}$, 9^{27}, $11^{1-5, 6b-9a}$ 265

119. Elisha's Farewell Message, 10^{35}, $13^{2a, 3-5, 7, 9, 14-20a, 12-18, 25}$ 267

THE PERIOD OF ASSYRIAN DOMINANCE

120. The Decline and Fall of Northern Israel, $14^{16, 25, 29}$, $15^{10, 13b, 14, 17b, 19, 20, 22, 25a, c, 27b, 29, 30a}$, $17^{1b, 3, 4, 6b, 24}$, 18^{9b-11} 269

121. Judah's Troubled History, $15^{1, 2b, 5}$, $16^{1-11a, 12-14, 18b, 20}$ 270

122. The Two Great Crises in Hezekiah's Reign, $18^{1, 2a, 8, 13-15, 4a, b, 17-20, 36, 37}$, $19^{1-7, 35-37}$ 272

123. The Heathen Reaction Under Manasseh, 20^{21}, $21^{1b, 2-6, 10-13, 16a, 18, 19b, 20, 23, 24}$ 274

THE LAST THREE DECADES OF JUDAH'S HISTORY

124. The Discovery and Promulgation of the Laws in Deuteronomy, $22^{1a, 3-16, 18, 19a, c, 20c}$, $23^{1-3a, c}$ . . . 276

125. Josiah's Drastic Reformation, $23^{4-8, 10, 11a, c, 12, 15a, c, 21-25}$ 278

SECTION PAGE

126. The Rapid Decline of the Southern State, $23^{29, 30, 31b, 33-35a}$, $24^{1a, 7, 1b, 2a, 6, 8b, 10-12a, 13-17, 18b}$ 279

127. The Final Destruction of Jerusalem, 24^{20b}, $25^{1-12, 27-30}$ 281

DANIEL

THE STEADFASTNESS AND THE DIVINE PROTECTION OF THE EXILES

128. The Courage of Four Jewish Captives, Dan. 1 . . 283

129. Daniel's Interpretation of Nebuchadrezzar's Dream, $2^{1-28, 31-48}$ 284

130. The Deliverance of Daniel's Faithful Friends, 3 . 289

131. The Handwriting on the Wall, $5^{1-11a, 12b-31a}$ . . . 292

132. Daniel's Escape from the Lions, $6^{1-18a, 19-24}$ . . . 294

ESTHER

A WOMAN'S LOYALTY TO HER RACE

133. The Follies of a Despot, Esther, $1^{3-10a, c, 12, 13a, 15-22a}$ 297

134. The Choice of a Queen, $2^{1-11, 15a, c, 17, 18}$ 298

135. Hatred That Knew No Pity, 2^{21-23}, $3^{1-6, 8-11, 13, 15b}$. 300

136. A Queen's Efforts to Save Her People, 4, 5 . . . 301

137. The Downfall of An Unscrupulous Conspirator, 6, 7 304

138. The Deliverance of the Persecuted Race, $8^{1-8, 10, 11, 14-17}$, $9^{2, 3, 17b, 19, 18b, 27, 24, 26a}$ 307

EZRA

THE RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM

139. Cyrus's Decree Regarding the Temple, Ezra $1^{1-8, 11}$ 310

140. The Rebuilding of the Temple, 5^{1-5}, 6^{1-15} 311

NEHEMIAH

NEHEMIAH'S SERVICES TO HIS RACE

SECTION PAGE

141. The Public Reading and Acceptance of the Ceremonial Law, 7^{13b}, $8^{1, 3}$, $9^{1, 3, 9, 20a, 23, 25b, 29b-33, 36-38}$, $10^{29b, 30-33, 35, 36, 37b, 40b}$ 313

142. Nehemiah's Response to the Call to Service, Neh. 1^{1}–2^{8} 316

143. The Arrival at Jerusalem, 2^{9-18} 318

144. Courage in the Face of Opposition, $4^{1-3, 6-23}$ . . . 319

145. His Social Reforms, 5 321

146. His Tact in Avoiding Pitfalls, 6^{1-16} 323

147. The Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem, 7^{1-5a}, 11^{1}, $12^{31, 32, 37-40, 42b, 43}$ 324

LAWS

EXODUS

148. Each Man's Obligation to Protect the Person and Property of Another, Ex. $21^{28-31, 33, 34}$, $22^{1-3b, 15}$. 326

149. Kindness to Men and Animals, 22^{21-27a}, $23^{4, 5, 10-12}$ 327

150. Responsibilities of Witnesses and Judges, $23^{1-3, 6-8}$ 328

DEUTERONOMY

151. The Duty of Love and Loyalty to God, Deut. $6^{4, 5}$, 10^{14-18}, 11^{1} 330

152. Public Worship to be Joyous and Social, $16^{16, 17}$, 1, 2, 6b, 4a, 8-11, 13-15 330

153. The Duty of Parents to Instruct Their Children, $6^{6-9, 20-25}$ 331

154. Consideration for the Dependent, $24^{10, 11, 6, 14, 15}$, $23^{15, 16}$, 15^{12-15}, $24^{17, 18}$ 332

SECTION PAGE

155. Generosity to the Poor and Needy, $10^{18b, 19}$, 24^{19-22}, $23^{19, 20}$, 15^{7-11} 333

LEVITICUS

156. Upright Dealing in All Business Relations, Lev. $19^{35, 36a}$, 6^{2-5} 335

157. Man's Duties to His Neighbor, $19^{11, 12a, 13a, 14a, 15b-16b, 17-18b, 32a, 33, 34a}$ 335

THE PROPHETS

AMOS

158. The Inevitable Consequences of Cruelty and Social Oppression, Amos $1^{3-8, 13-15}$, 2^{6-16} 337

159. The Source of the Prophet's Authority, $3^{1a, 2-8}$ . . 339

160. The Crimes That Utterly Destroy a Nation, 3^{9}–4^{3} 340

161. The Only Way to Win Divine Approval, $5^{6-15, 18-24}$ 341

162. The Betrayers of a Nation, $6^{1, 4-7, 12-14}$ 342

163. The Rejection of Amos's Message, 7 343

164. The Results of National Degeneracy, $8^{1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9c-12}$, $9^{1-4, 7, 8a, b}$ 345

HOSEA

165. Hosea's Undying Love for His Guilty Wife, Hos. $1^{2b, 3b-6, 8, 9}$, $2^{2a, b, 4, 5a, b}$, 3^{1-3} 348

166. Jehovah's Undying Love for Guilty Israel, $2^{2, 3, 5c-7c, 8a-c, 9-11, 13-23}$ 349

167. The Fatal Lack of Religious Education and True Repentance, $4^{1-5b, 6-12}$, 5^{15}, 6^{6} 351

168. Sowing the Wind and Reaping the Whirlwind, $7^{8, 11-14a}$, $8^{4, 7, 8a}$, 9^{6-7c} 353

SECTION PAGE

169. The Tenderness and Strength of God's Love, 11^{1-9} 353

170. The Prayer of True Penitence and the Divine Response, 14^{1-9} 354

ISAIAH

171. The Call of the Young Isaiah, Isaiah, 6^{1-11} 356

172. The Unfruitful Vineyard, 5^{1-7} 357

173. The Destroyers of Society, $5^{8-14, 17-24}$ 358

174. The Penalty for Seeking Only Material Wealth and Pomp, $2^{19, 6-8, 11, 10, 12-18}$, $3^{16b, 17, 24b-26}$, 4^{1} . . 360

175. The Fate of the Defiant Exploiters of the People, 9^{8-21}, 10^{1-4}, 5^{26-39} 361

176. The Necessity of Holding Fast in a National Crisis, $7^{2-8b, 9-17, 21-25}$, $8^{1-8, 16-18}$ 364

177. A Patriot's Efforts to Avert a Disastrous Alliance, $20^{1, 3-6}$ 366

178. The Fate of Rulers Who Refuse to Listen to Good Counsel, 28^{7-18} 367

179. The Folly of Trusting in Heathen Alliances Rather Than God, $30^{1-3, 8-11, 15-17, 21}$, 31^{1-3} 368

180. The Result of Trusting in Men Rather Than in Jehovah, 1^{2-8} 370

181. The Remedy for Judah's Ills, $1^{10-12, 14-26}$ 371

182. The Doom of Arrogance, $10^{5-9, 12-15, 24, 33, 34}$ . . . 372

MICAH

183. A Countryman's Condemnation of the Crimes of the City, Micah $1^{1a, c, 2-12}$ 374

184. False and True Religion, $2^{1-4, 6-11}$, 3^{1b-12}, 6^{6-8} . . . 376

185. *Universal Peace Based on Justice*, 4^{1-4}, $5^{2, 4}$ . . . 378

ZEPHANIAH

SECTION PAGE

186. The Judgment Threatening Guilty Judah, Zeph. $1^{2-7, 10b-13a, 14-18}$ 380

NAHUM

187. The Fate of the Pitiless Destroyer of Nations, Nahum 1^{1a}, $2^{1, 3-6, 10-13}$, $3^{1-3, 5-13, 18, 19}$ 382

JEREMIAH

188. The Beginning of a Heroic Life Work, Jer. $1^{1, 2, 4-19}$ 385

189. The Divine Appeal to a Guilty Nation, $2^{2b-3, 5b-8, 11-18}$, $3^{19, 20a}$, $4^{11b, c, 12, 16-18}$, 5^{1}, $6^{13, 14}$, $3^{12b-13b}$ . . 386

190. The Essentials of True Worship, 7^{1-15} 388

191. Facing Martyrdom Undisturbed, 26^{8-24} 389

192. The Bad Son of a Good Father, 22^{13-19a} 391

193. The Fate of Jeremiah's Sermons, $36^{1-10a, 11, 12a, b, 13-26, 32}$ 392

194. A Prophet's Prayer for His People's Pardon, 8^{18-20}, $14^{7-9, 19-21}$ 394

195. The Prophet's Doubts and Jehovah's Assurances, $12^{1, 2, 5}$, 20^{7-10}, 15^{15-21} 395

196. The Arraignment of a Nation's Faithless Religious Leaders, $23^{9b, c, 11, 17, 21-29}$ 397

197. The Fidelity of the Rechabites, $35^{1-4a, 5-8a, 11-13, 16-17c, 18b-19}$ 398

198. A Letter to Homesick Exiles, $29^{1, 3-14}$ 399

199. Jehovah's Eagerness to Restore His Afflicted People, $31^{2-6, 12, 13, 15b-20}$ 400

200. The New Era That Is to Come, 31^{21-34} 401

EZEKIEL

SECTION PAGE

201. Ezekiel's Vision of Jehovah, Ezek. $1^{1b, 3b-14, 22-28a}$. 403

202. A Prophet's Responsibility, $2^{3, 6, 7}$, 3^{14-21} 404

203. The Law of Individual Responsibility, $18^{1-9, 20-22}$. 405

204. Sorrow Consecrated to Service, 24^{15-27} 406

205. Jehovah the Shepherd of His Flock, $34^{1-6, 11b, 12, 13b, 14b-16, 23, 24, 26b, 30}$ 407

206. A Vision of National Revival, 37^{1-14} 408

HABAKKUK

207. The Consequences of Right and Wrong Doing, Hab. $1^{12a, b, 13-15b, 17}$, $2^{1-4, 6c-8b, 9-12, 13b, 15, 16}$ . . . 410

208. Faith Undaunted by Disaster and Misfortune, $3^{2, 8-13b, 16-19}$ 411

ISAIAH

209. The Vision of a God-Sent Ruler, Isaiah 9^{2-7} . . . 413

210. A Just Ruler and the Effect of His Rule, 11^{1-12} . 414

211. True Democracy, $32^{1-8, 15-17}$ 415

212. The Overthrow of Autocratic Might, $13^{4, 5a, 19-22}$, 14^{4b-15} 415

213. Jehovah the Rock of Ages, $26^{3-4, 7, 9, 17-19}$ 417

214. Jehovah Strong to Deliver, $33^{1-3, 14-22}$ 418

215. The Restoration of Jehovah's Exiled People, 40^{1-11} 419

216. Jehovah's Infinite Power to Save, 40^{12-31} 420

217. The Work and Methods of Jehovah's True Servant, 41^{8-10}, 42^{1-7} 422

218. Jehovah's Care for His People, 42^{18-25}, 43^{1-7} . . . 423

219. Responsibility of Jehovah's People to Be His Wit*nesses,* 43^{10-13}, 44^{2b-5}, $45^{23, 24a}$ 425

SECTION PAGE

220. The World-Wide Mission of Jehovah's Servant, 49^{1-13} 426

221. The Training of Jehovah's Faithful Servant, 50^{4-10} 428

222. The Future Appreciation of Jehovah's Heroic Servant, 52^{13}–$53^{9, 11c, 12}$ 428

223. The Restoration of Jehovah's Faithful People, 52^{1-12} 430

224. The Invitation to Share the Divine Blessings, 55 . 431

225. The Joys Awaiting Jehovah's People, $60^{1-5, 15-20}$. 433

226. The Joyous Task of Jehovah's True Prophet, 61^{1-9}, 62^{1-3} 434

227. All Peoples to Share in the Worship of Jehovah, 56^{1-8}, $19^{21, 22-25}$ 435

228. The Conditions of Fellowship with Jehovah, 57^{14-21a} 436

229. False and True Worship, 58^{1-12} 437

ZECHARIAH

230. The Coming of the Prince of Peace, Zech. $9^{9, 10}$. 439

MALACHI

231. The Divine Disapproval of Divorce, Mal. $2^{10, 13-16}$ 440

232. The Priestly Service that Jehovah Desires, 2^{17}–3^{4}, 2^{5-7} 440

233. The Rewards of Faithful Service, 3^{10}–$4^{3, 5, 6}$ . . 441

JOEL

234. The Spiritual Experiences in Store for the Penitent, $2^{12, 13, 26-29}$ 444

JONAH

SECTION PA

235. The Folly and Impiety of Narrow Patriotism, Jonah 1^{1}–$2^{1, 10}$ 4

236. God's Boundless Love for All His Creatures, 3, 4 4

DANIEL

237. The Ultimate Vindication of the Upright, Dan. 7^{1-18}, $12^{2, 3}$ 4

THE LYRICS

LAMENTATIONS

THE SONGS OF THE EXILES

238. Judah's Utter Desolation, Lam. $1^{1-8, 12, 13}$ 4

239. A Lament over Jerusalem and the Temple, 4^{1-16} . 4

240. The Misfortunes of the Survivors in Judah, 5^{1-18} . 4

241. The Heroic Spirit of the Faithful, 3^{22-41} 4

SONG OF SONGS

LOVE AND MARRIAGE SONGS

242. An Oriental Courtship Song, Song of Songs 1^{9}–2^{3} 4

243. A Springtime Song, 2^{8-14} 4

244. A Bridegroom's Praise of His Wedded Bride, $4^{1-5b, 7, 9-12, 15}$ 4

245. A Bride's Praise of Her Husband, 5^{10-16d} 4

246. *A Bride's* Charge to Her Husband on Entering *Their* New Home, $8^{6, 7, 11, 12}$ 1

PSALMS

PSALMS OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

SECTION PAGE

247. The Divine King, Psalms 24 461
248. The Majestic Ruler of the Universe, 93 462
249. The God Supreme above All Gods, 95 462
250. God's Just Rule, 96 463
251. God's Care for His People, 97 464
252. God's Benign Direction of Human History, 92 . 465
253. God's Power to Deliver from All Perils, 107^{1-32} . 466
254. God's Regard for the Poor and Needy, 113 . . . 467
255. God's Care for the Lowly, 138 468
256. God's Protection of His Servant, $18^{1-7, 16-30}$ . . . 469
257. God's Protection of His Chosen from Heathen Assaults, 2 470
258. God's Constant Watchfulness, 33^{12-22} 471
259. God's Readiness to Deliver the Upright, 34 . . . 472
260. God's Goodness and Mercy, 145 473
261. God's Protection of His Holy City, 48 474
262. The Joy of Worshipping the Lord in His Temple, 84 475
263. The Spirit of True Worship, 100 476
264. Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Great Affliction, 116 477
265. A Universal Call to Praise the Lord, 148 478
266. The United Praise of All Creation, 150 479

HYMNS OF TRUST AND ADORATION

267. The Revelation of God in the Work of Creation, 8 480
268. God's Goodness Revealed in Nature and in the *Law*, 19 480

SECTION PAGE
269. God's Power Revealed in the Storm, 29 482
270. God, the Benign Ruler of the Universe, 65 . . . 482
271. God's Love and Faithfulness, $89^{1, 2, 5-16}$ 483
272. God's Provision for All His Creatures, 104 . . . 484
273. The Boundlessness of God's Love, 36^{5-12} 487
274. God's Fatherly Goodness, 103 487
275. God's Intimate Knowledge of Men, $139^{1-18, 22, 23}$. 489
276. Confidence in God's Forgiving Love, 130 490
277. Longings that God Alone Can Satisfy, 42, 43 . . 491
278. Faith in God's Protection, 25^{1-21} 492
279. God the Unfailing Refuge, 46 493
280. The One Source of Hope and Strength, 62 494
281. A Spiritual Love-Song, 63^{1-8} 495
282. God the Helper of the Needy, 146 496
283. The Joy of Complete Trust in God, $16^{1, 2, 5-11}$ . . 497
284. The Happiness of Those Who Trust God, 40^{1-11} . 497
285. The Divine Shepherd, Guide, and Host, 23 . . . 498
286. The Silent Protector of His People, 121 499

PRAYERS

287. A Cry for Help in Mortal Distress, 6 500
288. An Evening Prayer, 4 500
289. A Petition for Protection, 86 501
290. The Prayer of the Supreme Sufferer, 22 502
291. The Prayer of Faith, 27^{1-6} 504
292. The Petition of a Faithful Servant of God, $31^{1-8, 14-16, 19-24}$ 505

SECTION PAGE

293. A Prayer of Thanksgiving, 30 506

294. The Prayer of an Exile, 61 507

295. A Missionary Prayer, 67 508

296. A Petition for an Upright Ruler, 72 508

297. A Petition for the Renewal of God's Favor, 85 . . 510

298. A Pilgrim's Prayer for the Prosperity of Jerusalem, 122 511

299. A Plea for Complete Forgiveness and Restoration, 51^{1-17} 511

300. A Prayer that God May Be Gracious to Man, 90 . 513

PSALMS OF MEDITATION

301. The Prosperity of the Upright and the End of the Wicked, 1 515

302. The Psalmist's Decalogue, 15 515

303. The Joy that Comes with Consciousness of Forgiveness, 32 516

304. The Fate of the Upright and of the Wicked, $37^{1-11, 16-26}$ 517

305. Death the Great Leveller, 49^{5-16} 518

306. The Consolation of the Innocent, 73^{11-26} 519

307. The Principles that Should Guide a Ruler, 101 . 521

308. The Importance of Keeping the Law, $119^{1-18, 33-38, 105, 114, 129, 139, 137, 165}$ 521

309. The Source of All Prosperity, 127 523

310. The Happiness of God's People, 144^{12-15} 523

311. The Joyous Lot of the Upright, $125^{1, 2}$, 128, 133 . 524

312. The Security of Him Who Trusts in God, 91 . . 524

THE TEACHINGS OF THE WISE

PROVERBS

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE WISE

SECTION PAGE

313. The Aims and Methods of the Wise, Prov. 8^{1}, 1^{2-6}, $8^{2-6, 9-11, 14-21}$ 526

314. The Rôle of Wisdom in the Universe, 8^{22-36} . . . 527

315. The Allurements of Wisdom and of Folly, $9^{1-6, 11, 13-18}$ 528

316. The Rewards of Heeding the Counsel of the Wise, $2^{1, 2, 4, 5, 10-14}$, $3^{13-18, 23, 24}$ 529

GOD AND MAN

317. The Nature of God, $3^{19, 20}$, 22^{2}, $15^{11, 3}$, $21^{2, 30, 31}$, 19^{21}, 16^{9}, 29^{26}, 11^{1}, 21^{3}, 15^{9}, 11^{20}, $15^{8, 29}$, 12^{22}, 6^{16-19} . . 531

318. God the Protector of the Upright, $3^{33, 34}$, $10^{3, 27}$, $22^{22, 23, 12}$, 18^{10}, 30^{5}, 20^{22}, 2^{6-8} 532

319. Man's Universal Characteristics, $27^{17, 19}$, 20^{27}, $14^{10, 13}$, 13^{12}, 25^{25}, 20^{6}, 12^{25}, 18^{14}, 14^{30}, 15^{13}, 17^{22} . . . 533

320. Advantages of Old Age and Youth, 20^{29}, 16^{31}, 17^{6} 534

321. The Law of Consequences, 11^{3}, 10^{9}, 13^{21}, $24^{15, 16}$, 14^{32}, $24^{19, 20}$, $10^{6, 7}$ 534

322. The Trusting Attitude toward God, 1^{7}, 15^{33}, 3^{5-10}, 28^{25}, 16^{3} 535

MAN'S EDUCATION

323. The Fool and the Price of His Folly, 17^{24}, 24^{7}, 10^{23}, 27^{22}, 19^{3}, 11^{22}, 14^{1}, 18^{7}, 3^{35}, 11^{29} 536

324. The Importance of the Receptive Attitude, 15^{7}, 12^{15}, 9^{3}, 15^{5}, 23^{12}, 19^{20}, 20^{5}, 4^{13}, $3^{11, 12}$, 15^{32} . . . 536

325. The Value of Education, 19^{8}, 15^{2}, 16^{22}, 13^{15}, 24^{3-6}, 4^{10-12} 537

MAN IN HIS FAMILY AND PERSONAL RELATIONS

CTION PAGE

6. The Responsibilities of Parents to Their Children, $22^{6, 15}$, 27^{6}, 20^{7} 539

7. The Duties of Children to Parents, $1^{8, 9}$, 23^{22}, 28^{7}, 10^{17}, 29^{1}, 28^{34}, 20^{20}, 15^{20}, 17^{25}, 27^{11}, 23^{25} 539

8. The Ideal Wife, $27^{15, 16}$, 12^{4}, 19^{14}, 31^{10-29} 540

9. Friendships, 20^{6}, 18^{24}, $27^{6, 9}$, $17^{9, 17}$, 13^{20} 541

0. Neighborliness, $3^{27, 28}$, 11^{25}, 14^{21} 542

MAN IN HIS ECONOMIC RELATIONS

1. The Penalty of Laziness and the Dignity of Labor, 16^{26}, 22^{13}, $26^{14, 15}$, 19^{24}, 15^{19}, 10^{4}, 24^{30-34}, 10^{5}, 22^{29} . 543

2. The Causes and Evils of Poverty, $23^{20, 21}$, 21^{17}, 28^{19}, 22^{16}, 13^{18}, 6^{6-9}, 20^{13}, 19^{4} 544

3. The Acquisition of Wealth, 22^{4}, 10^{22}, 11^{24}, 13^{11}, 14^{23}, 21^{6}, 28^{20} 545

4. The Relative Value of Wealth, 28^{6}, $16^{8, 19}$, 22^{1}, 10^{2}, 11^{28}, $23^{4, 5}$, 15^{16}, 30^{7-9} 545

MAN IN HIS LEGAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS

5. Duties of Witnesses and Judges, $24^{28, 29}$, 14^{25}, 12^{17}, 19^{5}, 15^{27}, 28^{21}, 24^{24-26}, $31^{8, 9}$ 547

6. Dangers of Acting as Bondsman, $22^{26, 27}$, 6^{1-5} . . 547

7. The Responsibilities of Rulers, 29^{14}, 16^{12}, $29^{2, 12, 4}$. 548

8. The Duties of Citizens, $25^{6, 7a, b}$, 29^{8}, 14^{24}, $11^{10, 11, 14}$ 548

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD CITIZEN

9. Temperance in Eating and Drinking, 25^{16}, 20^{1}, 23^{29-35} 550

0. Restraint in Speaking, 29^{20}, 18^{13}, 17^{28}, 21^{22}, 15^{23}, 25^{11}, 16^{24} 550

1. The Right Attitude toward Temptation, 28^{14}, 22^{3}, 4^{25-27}, 23^{6-8}, 25^{26} 551

SECTION PAGE

342. Control of the Sensual Passions, 29^{3}, 31^{3}, 23^{26-28}, 5^{3-13}, $6^{27, 28, 32, 33}$ 552

343. Control of the Temper, 15^{1}, 25^{28}, 29^{11}, 12^{16}, 19^{11}, $14^{17, 29}$, 15^{18}, 16^{32} 553

344. Modesty and Purity of Motive, 27^{1}, 26^{12}, 16^{18}, 11^{2}, 25^{27}, 27^{2}, 4^{23}, 11^{6} 554

345. Truth and Sincerity, 4^{24}, 12^{19}, 20^{17}, $26^{27, 28}$, $26^{18, 19}$, 6^{12-15}, 15^{21}, 28^{23} 554

346. A Forgiving and Conciliatory Spirit, 17^{13}, 20^{3}, 26^{21}, 17^{14}, 17^{1} 555

347. Consideration and Love, 12^{10}, 14^{31}, 21^{13}, 19^{17}, 10^{12}, $25^{21, 22}$, 15^{17}, $3^{3, 4}$ 556

ECCLESIASTES

KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST FOR THE REAL VALUES IN LIFE

348. The Eternal Wheel of Things, Eccles. 1^{2-9} . . . 557

349. The Futility of the Mere Pursuit of Pleasure, $1^{13-15, 18}$, 2^{1-11} 557

350. The Futility of Mere Wisdom, $2^{12a, 13-17}$ 559

351. Koheleth's Conclusions Regarding the Futility of Toil, $2^{18-25, 26b}$ 559

352. Koheleth's Despair of Finding Justice in This World or Beyond, $3^{9-11, 14, 16, 18}$, 4^{6}, 9^{11} 560

353. The Limitations and Use of Wealth, 5^{10-20} . . . 561

354. Finding the Best that This Uncertain Life Offers, 9^{3-10}, 11^{1-8} 562

355. The Enjoyment of Youth Before Old Age Comes, $11^{9a-c, 10}$, 12^{1-8} 563

356. Later Wise Men's Comments on Koheleth's Philosophy of Life, $7^{1-6, 8, 9}$, 9^{17}–10^{1}, $12^{13b, 14}$ 564

JOB

A LYRIC DRAMA PRESENTING VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

PROLOGUE

SECTION PAGE

357. Suffering is a Test of Man's Piety, Job 1, 2 . . . 566

THE FIRST CYCLE OF SPEECHES

358. Job: Human Life Is Intolerably Unjust, $3^{2-7, 10, 11, 13-15, 17-20, 23-25}$ 570

359. Eliphaz: No Man Can Be Absolutely Perfect; Therefore All Suffer, $4^{1-7, 12-19}$ 571

360. Suffering Is for Man's Discipline, 5^{17-26} 572

361. Job: Suffering Is Often Undeserved, $6^{1-6, 8-18, 21-30}$. 572

362. Life Is Full of Seeming Injustice, $7^{1-6, 9-18, 20-22}$ . . 574

363. Bildad: Each Man Gets His Just Deserts, $8^{1-13, 20-22}$ 575

364. Job: The Innocent Sufferer Cannot Vindicate Himself Before God, $9^{1-7, 15-35}$ 576

365. God Appears at Times to Be a Cruel Tyrant, $10^{1-16, 20-22}$ 578

366. Zophar: Repentance Will Avert Calamity and Bring Prosperity, $11^{1-9, 13-19}$ 579

367. Job: Special Pleading for God Is Futile, $12^{1-3, 13-16, 20, 21}$, $13^{1-19, 24-26}$ 580

368. If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again? 14 583

THE SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES

369. Eliphaz: It Is Impiety to Question the Justice of God' Rule, $15^{1-16, 21, 25}$ 585

370. Job: Even Though Unjustly Afflicted, Man Has a Friend in Heaven, $16^{1-4, 11-12a, 16-21}$ 586

SECTION PAGE

371. Bildad: Disaster Always Overtakes the Wicked, $18^{1-12, 17, 18}$ 587

372. Job: He Who Afflicts Will Vindicate His Servant After Death, $19^{1-9, 13-16, 19-27b}$ 588

373. Zophar: The Triumph of the Wicked Is Brief, $20^{1-5, 9, 27, 29}$ 589

374. Job: The Grim Facts of Life Belie the Traditional Explanation of Suffering, $21^{1-4, 7-9, 11, 12, 14-17b, 23-26, 29-34}$ 590

THE THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES

375. Eliphaz: Suffering Is Clear Evidence of Crime, $22^{1-11, 13-15, 23, 26, 28, 29}$ 592

376. Job: If Man Could Find God, His Problems Would Be Solved, $23^{1-13, 15-17}$, 24^{1-3} 593

377. Bildad: It Is Impossible for Man to be Perfect in God's Sight, 25^{1-6} 594

378. Job: Guilt Does Not Explain All Suffering, 27^{1-12} 594

379. Another Wise Man: The Divine Wisdom that Rules the Universe Is Incomprehensible, 28 . . 595

JOB'S OATH OF CLEARANCE

380. Job: To Lose the Consciousness of Fellowship with God Is the Supreme Misfortune, $29^{1-17, 21, 22}$, $30^{9, 20-22, 24-26}$ 597

381. Suffering Cannot Crush Him Who Faithfully Serves God and Man, $31^{5-25, 29-34, 38-40, 35-37}$ . . . 598

THE SPEECH OF ELIHU

382. Suffering is One of the Ways by Which God Speaks to Man, $32^{2a, c, 3, 6a, c, 7-12, 15, 16, 20}$, $33^{1, 5, 6, 4, 7, 13-25}$, $36^{15-17, 19}$, 37^{2-4} 601

THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

SECTION PAGE

383. The Lord: Finite Man Cannot Grasp and Therefore Justly Criticise the Infinite Plan of the Universe, 38, $40^{2, 8-14}$ 604

384. Job: A Larger Vision of God Begets Humility and Trust, 40^{3-5}, 42^{2-6} 607

STORIES AND HISTORIES

GENESIS

THE PRIMITIVE NARRATIVES

1. The Poem of Creation

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,
And while the earth was still unformed and chaotic,
With darkness on the surface of the deep,
And the Spirit of God brooding over the waters,
God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light.
And God saw that the light was good.
Then he separated the light from the darkness,
And he called the light Day and the darkness Night.
And there was an evening and a morning, making the first day.

Then God said, 'Let there be a vaulted expanse in the midst of the waters,
And let it separate the waters from the waters.'
So God made the heavens to separate the waters below
From the waters which were above the vaulted expanse.
And it was done.
And God called the expanse the Heavens.
And there was an evening and a morning, making the second day.

Then God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together,
And let the dry land appear.'

And it was done.
And God called the dry land Earth
And the gathering together of the waters Seas.
And God saw that it was good.

And God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation:
Plants on the earth which yield their own kind of seed,
And trees that bear fruits in which are their own seed.'
And it was done.
And the earth brought forth vegetation:
Plants which yield their own kind of seed,
And trees which bear fruit in which is their own seed.
And God saw that it was good.
And there was an evening and a morning, making the third day.

Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens
To separate the night from the day.
Let them be signs to mark the seasons, the days, and the years,
Let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to light the earth.'
And it was done.
So God made the two great lights:
The greater to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night.

God made the stars also and placed them in the expanse of the heavens
To shed light upon the earth,
To rule over the day and over the night,
And to separate light from darkness.
And God saw that it was good.
And there was an evening and a morning, making the fourth day.

Then God said, 'Let the waters teem with living creatures,
And let birds fly over the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.'
And God created the great sea monsters,
All kinds of living, moving creatures with which the waters teem,
And all kinds of winged birds.
And God saw that it was good.
And he blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful,
Increase, and fill the waters in the seas,
And let the birds multiply on the earth.'
And there was an evening and a morning, making the fifth day.

Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures:
Cattle and reptiles and wild beasts.'
And it was done.
So God made all the different kinds of wild beasts,
And the cattle, and everything that crawls upon the ground.
And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image,
And let him rule over the fish of the sea,
The birds of the heavens, the cattle, the wild beasts,
And all the reptiles that crawl upon the ground.'
So God created man like himself, like God he created him.
He created them male and female.

Then God blessed them, and said to them, 'Bear children,
Increase, people the earth, and conquer it;
Rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens,
And over every living thing that crawls upon the ground.'

And God said, 'See, to you I give every plant that yields seed,
Which is on the surface of all the earth,
And every tree in which is fruit that yields seed.
It shall be food for you.
And to every wild beast and to every bird of the heavens,
And to everything that crawls on the earth, in which there is life,
I give every green herb for food.'
And it was done.
And when God saw all that he had made,
He perceived that it was very good.
And there was an evening and a morning, making the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their host.
When on the seventh day God finished the work which he had done,
He rested on the seventh day from all his work;
And God blessed the seventh day and set it apart,
For in it he rested from all the creative work which he had done.

2. The Provisions for Man's Physical, Moral, and Social Development

At the time when Jehovah made earth and heaven, there were as yet no plants on the earth, and no vegetation had sprung up; for Jehovah had not sent rain upon the earth. There was no man to till the soil; but a mist used to rise from the earth and water all the surface of the ground.

Then Jehovah moulded man out of dust taken from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. And Jehovah

planted a garden in Eden, far in the East; and from the soil he made grow all kinds of trees that are pleasant to look at and good for food—the tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree that gives the knowledge of good and evil.

Then Jehovah took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to till it and to care for it. He also gave the man this command: 'You may freely eat from every tree of the garden, except from the tree that gives the knowledge of good and evil; from this you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.'

Then Jehovah said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suited to him.' So out of the ground Jehovah formed all the wild beasts and birds, and made them come to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever he called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all cattle and all the wild birds and beasts; but for the man himself there was found no helper suited to him.

Then Jehovah caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he slept, he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The rib which he had taken from the man Jehovah built up into a woman and caused her to go to the man. Then the man said, 'This now is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called Woman, for from man she was taken.' For this reason a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they two become one.

3. Sin and Its Tragic Consequences

The man and his wife were both naked, yet felt no shame.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild beast that Jehovah had made, and it said to the woman, 'Has God really commanded, "You shall not eat from every tree of the garden"?' The woman answered, 'We may eat of the fruit of all the trees of the garden; only regarding the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat from it, nor shall you touch it, for if you do, you shall die."' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You shall not surely die; for God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing what is good and what is evil.'

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and attractive to look at and desirable for acquiring wisdom, she took some of its fruit and ate. Then she gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig-leaves together and made girdles for themselves. But when they heard the sound of the footsteps of Jehovah, as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, the man and his wife hid from him among the trees of the garden.

When Jehovah called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' he replied, 'I heard the sound of thy footsteps in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked; so I hid myself.' Jehovah said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree from which I forbade you to eat?' The man answered, 'The woman whom thou didst place beside me—she gave me fruit from the tree and I ate.' Jehovah said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman replied, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'

Then Jehovah said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, you shall be more accursed than all cattle and all the wild beasts. You shall crawl on your belly and eat dust all your life. I will establish enmity between you and the woman and between your descendants and her descendants. They shall bruise your head, and you shall wound them on the heel.'

To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your anguish and pain during your pregnancy; with pain shall you bear children. Your desire for children shall make you subject to your husband, and he shall rule over you.'

But to the man he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree from which I forbade you to eat, the ground shall be cursed because of you; as long as you live, you shall earn a living only by painful toil. The ground shall always bring forth thorns and thistles, and you shall eat the herbs of the field. By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return!'

Then Jehovah sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. But Jehovah made garments of skin for the man and his wife, and clothed them.

4. Cain the Criminal

Adam named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living beings, and she gave birth to Cain, and she said, 'I have created a man with the help of Jehovah!' She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Abel was a shepherd, but Cain was a farmer.

In the course of time Cain brought some of the

produce of the ground as an offering to Jehovah. Abel too brought some of the choicest animals of his flock and sacrificed their fat pieces. And Jehovah looked with approval on Abel and his offering; but he could not receive Cain and his offering with approval.

Therefore Cain was very angry and his face fell. So Jehovah said to Cain, 'Why are you angry and why do you scowl? If you do what is right and good, will not your offering be accepted? But if you do wrong, sin crouches at the door and the inclination to sin will overcome you, but you should master it.'

Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let us go into the field.' And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother and killed him.

Then Jehovah said to Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' He answered, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?' Jehovah said, 'What have you done? Hark! your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. Even now you are cursed by the very ground that has opened to receive your brother's blood from your hand. Whenever you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a vagabond and a wanderer on the earth.'

Then Cain said to Jehovah, 'My punishment is more than I can bear. See, thou hast driven me out to-day from this land, and I shall no longer be able to worship thee; I shall become a vagabond and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.'

But Jehovah said to him, 'If any one kills you, the crime shall be avenged sevenfold.' So Jehovah placed a tribal mark on Cain, to keep any one who found him from killing him. And Cain departed from Jehovah's presence and lived in the land of Wandering.

5. The Survival of the Morally Fit

When Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was increasing in the world, and that the trend of his thoughts was at all times toward evil, he was greatly grieved and regretted that he had made man on the earth. Therefore Jehovah said, 'I will destroy all living beings from off the ground, for I regret that I have made them.'

But Noah had won Jehovah's favor. So Jehovah said to Noah, 'I have determined to put an end to all living beings, for the earth is filled with their acts of injustice; I am going to destroy them from the earth. Make yourself an ark of cypress wood. Construct rooms in the ark, and coat it within and without with pitch. This is how you shall build it: the length of the ark shall be five hundred feet, its breadth eighty feet, and its height fifty feet. Make a roof for it and place the door on the side. Construct it with lower, second, and third storeys. For I am about to bring floods of water upon the earth to destroy from under heaven every living thing in which is the breath of life; every thing that is on the earth shall die.'

Then Jehovah said to Noah, 'Enter with all your household into the ark; for I see that in this age you are living before me an upright life. Of all the beasts that are fit for food and sacrifice you shall take with you seven, the male and the female; but of the beasts that are not fit for food and sacrifice two, the male and the female; and of the wild birds that are fit for food and sacrifice seven, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. After seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will destroy from the surface of the ground every living thing that I have made.'

Then Noah did all that Jehovah commanded him. When the waters of the flood came upon the earth he, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, together with the beasts that were fit for food and sacrifice and the beasts that were not fit, and the birds, and everything that creeps upon the ground, entered the ark because of the waters of the flood.

The rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights, and Jehovah shut Noah in the ark; and the waters increased and raised up the ark, and it was lifted high above the earth. All creatures on the land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. Jehovah destroyed everything that existed upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and creeping things, and the birds of the heavens, and Noah only was left and they who were with him in the ark.

Then God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the animals that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to blow over the earth, and the flood subsided, the rain from heaven ceased, and the waters withdrew more and more from the land.

After forty days Noah opened the window of the ark, and sent out a raven; and it kept going to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. He also sent out a dove to see if the waters had subsided from the surface of the ground; but the dove found no rest for her foot, and so returned to him to the ark, for the waters covered the surface of the whole earth. Therefore he reached out his hand and took her and brought her back into the ark.

Then he waited seven days longer and again sent out the dove from the ark. And the dove came in to him at dusk; and in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive-leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. And he waited seven days more and

sent out the dove; but it did not return to him again. So Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. Then he, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went out of the ark.

And Noah built an altar to Jehovah and took one of every beast and bird that was fit for sacrifice and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And Jehovah said to himself, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the inclination of his heart is evil from his youth, nor will I again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'

6. The Rainbow of Promise

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Bear children and multiply and repopulate the earth. And every wild beast and bird and everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea shall fear and dread you; into your hand they are given. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; as I gave the green herbs, I give them all to you. Only you shall not eat flesh while the life is in it —that is, the blood.

'Moreover, your own life-blood will I require for a man's life; from every beast will I require it, and from every man who takes his brother's life. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image. But you are to bear children and repopulate the whole earth and subdue it.'

God also said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'Now I make this solemn agreement with you and with your descendants and with every living creature

that is with you, with the birds, the cattle, and every wild animal that is with you of all that have gone out of the ark, even with every beast of the earth: No living thing shall ever again be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.'

And God said, 'This is the symbol of the solemn agreement that I make for all time between me and you and every living creature that is with you: I have placed my bow in the cloud and it shall be the symbol of the solemn agreement between me and the inhabitants of the earth. Whenever I bring a cloud over the earth and the bow is seen in the cloud, I will remember the agreement which is between me and you and every living creature; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all living things.'

7. The Traditional Origin of Nations and Languages

All the inhabitants of the earth had one language and vocabulary; and as they travelled westward, they found a broad valley in the land of Babylonia, and made their home there.

Then they said one to another, 'Come, let us make bricks and thoroughly bake them.' So they had bricks for stone and asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top will touch the heavens, and thus make a landmark, that we may not be scattered over all the earth.'

But when Jehovah came down to see the city and tower men had built, he said, 'See, they are one people and all have one language. This is the beginning of their activity, and now nothing which they propose to do will seem too difficult for them. Come, let us go

down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand each other's speech.'

So Jehovah scattered them from there over all the earth; and they ceased building the city. Therefore they named it Babel [Confusion], for there Jehovah confused the language of all the inhabitants of earth and scattered them over the whole world.

8. An Unselfish Pioneer

The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Terah, a descendant of Shem, was the father of Abraham, Nahor and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot.

Now Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity in Ur of the Chaldeans. And both Abraham and Nahor married. The name of Abraham's wife was Sarah, but she had no children. And Terah took his son Abraham and his grandson Lot, and Sarah his daughter-in-law, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they reached Haran they stayed there; and Terah died in Haran.

Then Jehovah said to Abraham, 'Go forth from your country, from your relatives and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation; and I will surely bless you and make your name illustrious, so that you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you, and all the families of the earth shall ask for themselves a blessing like your own.'

So Abraham set out, as Jehovah had commanded him; and Lot went with him. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. He took Sarah his wife and Lot his brother's son and all the property that they had acquired in Haran, and started for the land of Canaan.

Then Abraham passed through the land to a place called Shechem, to the oak of Moreh; and the Canaanites were then in that land. Jehovah revealed himself to Abraham and said, 'To your descendants will I give this land.' There also he built an altar to Jehovah who had revealed himself to him. From there he removed to the hill at the east of Bethel and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, and there too he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

Now Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold; Lot also, who went with Abraham, had so many flocks and herds and tents that the land was not fertile enough to support them both. So when there was a quarrel between Lot's herdsmen and Abraham's herdsmen, Abraham said to Lot, 'I beg of you, let there be no quarrel between me and you or between my herdsmen and yours, for we are relatives. Is not the whole land before you? I beg of you, separate yourself from me. If you go to the left, then I will go to the right; or if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.'

Then Lot looked about and saw that all the plain of the Jordan was well watered everywhere as far as Zoar (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), like a garden of Jehovah. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan and went on to the east; thus they separated from one another. Abraham lived in the land of Canaan and Lot lived in the cities of the plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom; but the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinned against Jehovah.

Jehovah said to Abraham, after Lot had separated from him, 'Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are northward, southward, eastward and

westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as many as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can count the dust of the earth, then your descendants may also be counted. Rise, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.'

Then Abraham moved his tent and lived in the oak grove of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar to Jehovah.

9. Hospitality to Strangers

Jehovah also appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day; and, as he looked up, three men stood there before him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed to the ground and said, 'Sirs, if you are willing to do me a favor, do not, I beg of you, pass by your servant. Since you have come to your servant, let a little water be brought, that you may wash your feet, and lie down under the tree. And let me bring some food, that you may refresh yourselves; afterward you may go on your way.' They replied, 'Do as you have said.'

So Abraham hastened to Sarah's tent and said, 'Make ready quickly four measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes.' Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a calf that was tender and good, and gave it to the servant, and he prepared it quickly. Then he took curd and milk, with the calf which he had prepared, and served them; and he waited on them under the tree, while they ate.

Then they said to him, 'Where is your wife?' He said, 'There within the tent.' One of them said, 'I

will surely return to you about nine months from now, and then your wife shall have a son.' But Sarah was listening behind the door of the tent. Now Sarah and Abraham were advanced in years; therefore Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I and my husband are so old shall I have pleasure?' But Jehovah said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, saying, "Shall I, indeed, even when I am old give birth to a child?" Is anything too wonderful for Jehovah? At the appointed time about nine months from now, I will return to you and Sarah shall have a son.'

10. The Destruction of the Morally Unfit

Then the men started from there and looked off in the direction of Sodom; and Abraham went with them to speed them on their way. But Jehovah said, 'The complaint has come that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and very heinous. I will go down and see whether they have done exactly as the complaint comes to me; and if they have not, I will know.'

As the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, Abraham remained standing before Jehovah. Then Abraham approached him and said, 'Wilt thou sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are within the city fifty who are righteous; wilt thou sweep away and not forgive the place for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from thee to do this: to slay the righteous with the wicked! And that the righteous should be treated as the wicked, far be it from thee! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do what is just?' Then Jehovah said, 'If I find within the city of Sodom fifty who are righteous, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.' Abraham answered, 'I have ventured to speak to Jehovah, even

though I am but dust and ashes. Suppose there be five lacking of the fifty righteous; wilt thou sweep away all the city for lack of five?' And he said, 'I will not sweep it away, if I find forty-five there.'

Then Abraham spoke to him again, and said, 'Suppose forty are found there?' He replied, 'For the sake of forty I will not do it.' Then Abraham said, 'Oh, let not Jehovah be angry, but let me speak. Suppose thirty are found there?' He answered, 'I will not do it, if I find thirty there.' Then Abraham said, 'Thou seest that I have ventured to speak to Jehovah. Suppose twenty are found there?' He replied, 'For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.' Then Abraham said, 'Oh let not Jehovah be angry, but let me speak once more. Suppose ten are found there?' And he said, 'For the sake of the ten I will not destroy it.'

Two angels in human form came to Sodom in the evening, as Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them he arose to meet them, and he bowed with his face to the earth and said, 'Sirs, turn aside, I beg of you, into your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet; then you can rise up early and go on your way.' And they said, 'No, we will spend the night in the street.' But he urged them so strongly that they went with him and entered his house; and he made a feast for them and baked bread made without yeast, and they ate.

But before they had lain down, the citizens of Sodom, both young and old, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called out to Lot, 'Where are the men who came in to you to-night? Bring them out to us that we may know them.'

Then Lot went out to them at the entrance of his house, but he shut the door after him. And he said, 'I beg of you, my friends, do not do what is wrong.

See, I have two unmarried daughters; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you desire; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shadow of my roof.' But they replied, 'Stand back.' And they added, 'This one came in as a foreigner to live here, but now he would set himself up as a judge! We will treat you worse than them.' And they pressed hard against Lot and advanced to break the door. But the men reached out and drew Lot to them into the house and shut the door. Then they smote the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, with blindness, so that they grew tired of searching for the door.

Then the men said to Lot, 'Have you any one else here? Bring your sons-in-law, your sons and daughters, and whoever you have in the city out of this place, for we are about to destroy it, because great complaint concerning them has come to Jehovah and he has sent us to destroy it.' So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, 'Up, get out of this place, for Jehovah will destroy the city.' But his sons-in-law thought he was jesting.

When the dawn appeared, the angels urged Lot, saying, 'Get up, take your wife and your two daughters that you may not be swept away in the punishment of the city.' When he hesitated, the men took him by the hand and led him and his wife and his two daughters outside the city, for Jehovah was merciful to him.

When they had brought them outside, they said, 'Fly for your life; do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the heights, that you may not be swept away!' But Lot said to them, 'Oh, sirs, not so! See, your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown great mercy to me in

saving my life. I cannot escape to the heights, lest some calamity overtake me, and I die. See now, this village is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Oh, let me escape there (is it not small?), and my life will be saved.' Jehovah said to him, 'I have also granted you this favor, in that I will not overthrow the village of which you have spoken. Make haste, escape to it, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.' Therefore the village was called Zoar [Little].

The sun had risen when Lot came to Zoar. Then Jehovah caused brimstone and fire from heaven to rain upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and he destroyed those cities and all the plain, with all their inhabitants and all the vegetation. But Lot's wife, who was following him, looked back; and she became a pillar of salt.

Early in the morning Abraham rose and went to the place where he had stood before Jehovah; and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the plain; and as he looked, the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a smelting-furnace.

Then Lot went up from Zoar with his two daughters and lived in a cave on the heights, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar. His oldest daughter bore a son, and named him Moab. He is the father of the present Moabites. The younger also bore a son and named him Ben-ammi. That one is the father of the present Ammonites.

11. Jehovah's Sympathy for Outcasts

Jehovah remembered what he had told Sarah, and he did to her as he had promised. So Sarah bore a son to Abraham in his old age at the fixed time of which God had told him. And Abraham named him Isaac [Laughter]. And Sarah said, 'God has made

laughter for me; every one who hears will laugh with me.'

When the child grew up, Abraham made a great feast on the day that he was weaned. But Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. Therefore she said to Abraham, 'Drive out this slave girl and her son, for the son of this slave girl shall not be heir with my son Isaac.' This request was exceedingly displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. But Jehovah said to Abraham, 'Do not be displeased because of the lad and because of your slave girl. Listen to all that Sarah says to you, for only through the line of Isaac shall your name be perpetuated. But I will also cause the son of the slave girl to become a great nation, because he is your son.'

Then Abraham got up early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, and he put the boy upon her shoulder and sent her away. So she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she left the child under one of the desert shrubs and went a short distance away and sat down opposite him, for she said, 'Let me not see the death of the child.' So she sat there while the boy began to cry.

Then Jehovah heard the cry of the boy, and the angel of Jehovah called to Hagar from heaven and said, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for Jehovah has heard the cry of the boy even there where he lies. Rise, lift him up, and hold him fast by the hand, for I will make him a great nation.' And Jehovah opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. Then she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

And Jehovah was with the boy, and he grew up, and lived in the wilderness of Paran, and became a bowman. And his mother secured a wife for him from Egypt.

12. Abraham's Loyalty to His Divine Friend

After these events Jehovah tested Abraham, saying to him, 'Abraham'; and he said, 'Here am I.' And he said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'

So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had split the wood for the burnt-offering, he set out for the place of which God had told him. On the third day, when Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance, he said to his servants, 'Stay here with the ass, while I and the lad go over there; and when we have worshipped, we will come back to you.'

Then Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife, and they both went on together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father!' and he replied, 'Yes, my son.' And he said, 'Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' And Abraham answered, 'My son, God will himself provide a lamb for a burnt-offering.' So the two went on together. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand, and took the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of Jehovah called to him from heaven, 'Abraham, Abraham!' and he said, 'Here am I.' And he said, 'Do not put your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, because now I know that you revere God, for you have not held back your son, your only son, from me.'

Then Abraham looked up, and there he saw a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. So Abraham took the ram and offered him up as a burnt-offering instead of his son; and he named the place 'Jehovah will Provide,' so that we now have the saying: 'In the mountain of Jehovah provision will be made.'

The angel of Jehovah called to Abraham again from heaven and said, 'Jehovah declares, "By myself I swear: Because you have done this thing and have not kept back your son, your only son, I will surely bless you; and I will make your descendants as many as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the sea shore, so that they shall take possession of the gates of their enemies; and all the nations of the earth shall ask for themselves a blessing like theirs, because you have obeyed my command."'

So Abraham returned to his servants, and they set out for Beersheba; and he made his home in Beersheba.

13. The Mission of Abraham's Devoted Servant

When Abraham was very old and Jehovah had blessed him in every way, Abraham said to the eldest of his household servants, who had charge of all his affairs, 'Put your hand under my thigh, while I make you swear by Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not let my son marry one of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, but that you

will go to my own country and to my relatives and there get a wife for my son Isaac.' The servant said to him, 'Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?' Abraham said to him, 'See to it that you do not take my son back there. Jehovah, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from my native land and who solemnly promised me, "To your descendants I will give this land," will send his angel before you and there you will get a wife for my son. But if the woman is not willing to come with you, then you will be free from this oath to me; only never take my son back there.' So the servant put his hand under Abraham's thigh and took the oath.

Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and set out, having at his disposal all of his master's precious possessions. So he went to Aram Naharaim, to the city of Nahor. And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well in the evening, at the time when women go out to draw water. Then he said, 'O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, give me, I pray thee, success to-day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. Here I am standing by the spring of water and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. May that young woman to whom I shall say, "Please let down your water jar that I may drink"; and who answers, "Drink, and I will also water your camels," may she be the one thou hast destined for thy servant Isaac; and by this I shall know that thou hast shown kindness to my master.'

Then even before he was through speaking, Rebekah, who was the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her

water jar upon her shoulder. She was very beautiful and unmarried. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up. Then the servant ran to meet her, saying, 'Please let me drink a little water from your jar.' She answered, 'Drink, my lord,' and quickly let down her water jar from her shoulder upon her hand and gave him a drink. When she had finished giving him a drink she said, 'I will draw for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.' So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. Meanwhile the man was silently gazing at her in order to determine whether Jehovah had made his journey successful or not.

As soon as the camels had finished drinking, the man took a golden nose ring, five ounces in weight, and put it in her nose, and on her arms two golden bracelets weighing five ounces, and said, 'Whose daughter are you? Tell me, I beg of you. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?' She answered, 'I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah and Nahor.' She also said to him, 'We have plenty of straw and feed and there is a place in which to spend the night.' Then the man bowed his head and worshipped Jehovah, saying, 'Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who has continued to show his mercy and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, Jehovah has led me on the way to the house of my master's relatives.'

Then the young woman ran and told these things to her mother's household. Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban; and Laban ran out to the man at the spring. And when he saw the bracelets on his sister's hands and the ring, and when he heard Rebekah say, 'This is what the man said to me'; he went to the

man, who was still standing by the camels at the spring, and said, 'Come in, you who are blessed by Jehovah! Why do you stand outside? For I have cleared the house and have room for the camels.' So he brought the man into the house and took the packs off the camels and furnished straw and feed for them, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.

But when food was set before him to eat, he said, 'I will not eat until I have made known my errand.' They answered, 'Speak.' He said, 'I am Abraham's servant; and Jehovah has blessed my master greatly, so that he has become very rich. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and asses. Now Sarah my master's wife bore him a son when she was old, and my master has given him all that he has. My master also made me swear, saying, "Do not let my son marry one of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, but go to my father's home and to my relatives and secure a wife for my son." When I said to my master, "What if the woman will not follow me?" he said to me, "Jehovah, whom I revere and serve, will send his angel with you and make your mission successful, and you will secure for my son a wife from my relatives and from my father's household. Then you shall be free from your oath to me. But if you go to my family and they do not give her to you, you shall also be free from your oath to me." So I came today to the spring and said, "O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, if thou wilt make the mission on which I am going successful, see, I am standing by the spring of water, then let the young woman who comes to draw, to whom I say, Please give me a little water from your jar to drink, and who shall say to me,

Drink, and I will also draw for your camels, let that one be the woman whom Jehovah has destined for my master's son."

'Even before I was through speaking, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder and went down to the spring and drew water. And when I said to her, "Please let me drink," she quickly let down her water jar from her shoulder and answered, "Drink, and I will also water your camels." So I drank and she also watered the camels. Then I asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" And she said, "The daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor and Milcah." So I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms. And I bowed my head and worshipped and blessed Jehovah the God of my master Abraham who had led me in the right way to secure the daughter of my master's brother for his son. Tell me whether or not you will deal kindly and truly with my master, so that I may act accordingly!'

Then Laban and his household answered, 'The matter is in the hands of Jehovah. We cannot give you either an adverse or a favorable answer. See, Rebekah is before you; take her and go and let her be the wife of your master's son, as Jehovah has said.'

When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed to the ground before Jehovah. Then he brought out gold and silver ornaments and clothing and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they rose in the morning, the servant said, 'Send me away to my master.' But Rebekah's brother and mother answered, 'Let the young woman stay with us a month or at least ten days; after that

she may go.' But he said to them, 'Do not delay me, for Jehovah has made my mission successful. Send me away that I may go to my master.' Then they said, 'We will call the young woman and consult her.' So they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' She answered, 'I will go.' So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse with Abraham's servant and his men.

They also blessed Rebekah, saying to her:

> Our sister! may your descendants become thousands and thousands!
> And may they capture the cities of their enemies.

Then Rebekah set out with her maids and, riding upon the camels, they followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and went away.

Now Abraham had given all that he had to Isaac, and had breathed his last, dying in a good old age, satisfied with living, and had been gathered to his ancestors. And Isaac lived near Beer-lahai-roi in the South Country. In the evening, when he had gone out to meditate in the field, he looked up and saw camels coming. Rebekah too looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she quickly alighted from the camel and said to the servant, 'Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?' When the servant said, 'It is my master,' she took her veil and covered her face. Then the servant told Isaac all that he had done. And Isaac brought Rebekah to the tent of Sarah his mother, and she became his wife; and he loved her. Thus Isaac was comforted after the death of his father.

14. Jacob's Trickery in the Home

Now Isaac prayed to Jehovah in behalf of his wife, because she had no children; and Jehovah heard his prayer, so that when the time came for her to become a mother, she gave birth to twins. The first was from birth ruddy, all over like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau [Hairy]. Afterwards his brother came holding Esau's heel with his hand; so he was named Jacob [Supplanter].

As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the fields, but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed about the tents. Isaac loved Esau, for he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Once when Jacob was preparing a stew, Esau came in from the fields, and he was faint; so he said to Jacob, 'Let me swallow some of that red stew, for I am faint.' Therefore his name was called Edom [Red]. But Jacob said, 'Sell me first of all your right as the first-born.' Esau replied, 'See, I am at the point of death now! So of what use is this birthright to me?' Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and stewed lentils, and when he had had something to eat and drink, he got up and went away. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

15. Jacob's Unscrupulous Ambition

When Isaac was so old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, he called Esau his oldest son and

said to him, 'My son'; and he replied, 'Here I am.' Then Isaac said, 'See, I am old and do not know how soon I may die. Now therefore take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out into the fields and hunt game for me and prepare for me savory food such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, in order that I may bless you before I die.'

Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went into the fields to hunt game in order to bring it, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, 'I just now heard your father say to your brother Esau, "Bring me game and prepare for me savory food that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of Jehovah before I die." Now, my son, do as I tell you: Go to the flock and bring me from there two good kids, and I will make of them savory food for your father, such as he loves. Then you shall bring it to him, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before he dies.' But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, 'You know that my brother Esau is a hairy man, while I am smooth. Perhaps my father will feel of me; then I shall appear to him as a mocker, and I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing.' But his mother said to him, 'Upon me be your curse, my son; only obey me and go, bring the kids to me.' So he went and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food such as his father loved.

Rebekah also took the fine clothes of her older son Esau, which she had with her in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. Then she put the skins of the kids upon his hands and upon the smooth part of his neck, and she placed the savory food and the bread which she had prepared in his hand, and he went to his father and said, 'My father'; and Isaac replied, 'Here I am; who are you, my son?' Jacob

said, 'I am Esau your oldest son. I have done as you commanded me. Arise, if you will, and sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me.' Isaac said to his son, 'How very quickly you have found it, my son.' He answered, 'Yes, because Jehovah your God gave me success.'

Then Isaac said to Jacob, 'Come here, my son, that I may feel of you to find out whether you are really my son Esau or not.' So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt of him and said, 'The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' Yet he did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's. So he blessed him.

And he said, 'Are you really my son Esau?' Jacob replied, 'I am.' Then Isaac said, 'Bring it to me, that I may eat of my son's game, in order that I may bless you.' So he brought it to him, and he ate. He also brought him wine, and he drank.

Then his father Isaac said to him, 'Come near now and kiss me, my son.' And as he came near and kissed him, he smelled the smell of his garment, and blessed him and said:

See, the smell of my son
Is as that of fields blessed by Jehovah.
May God give you dew from heaven,
A share in the earth's fertile places,
And plenty of corn and wine.
May peoples be subject to you,
And nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brothers,
Let your mother's sons bow down before you,
Cursed be all who curse you,
And blessed be all who bless you.

As soon as Isaac had given Jacob his blessing, and Jacob was on the point of leaving his father, Esau his

brother came in from his hunting. He also had made savory food and was bringing it to his father. So he said to him, 'Father, arise and eat of your son's game, that you may bless me.' But Isaac his father said to him, 'Who are you?' He answered, 'I am your son, your oldest, Esau.' Then Isaac trembled violently and said, 'Who then is he that has hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate plentifully before you came, and blessed him? Also blessed shall he be!'

When Esau heard the words of his father, he uttered a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father.'

But Isaac said, 'Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing.' Esau said, 'Is it not because he was named Supplanter that he has supplanted me these two times: my birthright he took, and now he has taken my blessing!' Then he said, 'Have you reserved a blessing for me?' Isaac answered Esau, 'See, I have made him your master and all his relatives I have given to him as servants, and with grain and new wine I have furnished him the means of support. What then can I do for you, my son?' Esau said to his father, 'Is that the only blessing you have, my father?' and Esau began to weep aloud. Then Isaac his father answered him:

You shall live far from earth's fertile places,
And away from the dew of heaven;
And by your sword you shall live,
And your brother you shall serve.
But whenever you shall break loose,
You shall break off his yoke from your neck.

16. The Dream of a Troubled Fugitive

Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing which his father had given him. And Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill Jacob my brother.'

When the words of her older son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, 'Your brother Esau is going to take vengeance on you by killing you. Now therefore, my son, listen to me: flee to my brother Laban at Haran and stay with him for a time until your brother's anger is averted and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you back. Why should I lose both of you in one day?'

Then Jacob set out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And when he arrived at a certain place, he passed the night there, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones from its place and put it under his head and lay down to sleep. Then he dreamed and saw a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. Jehovah also stood beside him and said, 'I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants. See, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you again to this habitable land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, 'Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not.' And he was filled with awe and said, 'How awe-inspiring is this place; it is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

So Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it. And he named that place Bethel [House of God], although the earlier name of the town was Luz. Jacob also made this vow, 'If God will be with me and protect me on this journey which I am making and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, and I return safe and sound to my father's house, then Jehovah shall be my God and this stone which I have set up as a pillar shall be a house of God. And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give a tenth to thee.'

17. The Deceiver Deceived

Then Jacob continued on his journey and arrived at the land of the children of the East. And he looked and saw a well in the field, and there were three flocks of sheep lying down by it; for from that well they watered the flocks; but the stone upon the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they used to roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep and then put the stone again in its place upon the mouth of the well.

Jacob said to the men, 'My kinsmen, from where do you come?' They said, 'We are from Haran.' Then he said to them, 'Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?' And they said, 'We know him.' And he said to them, 'Is all well with him?' And they said, 'All is well; indeed, this is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep.' And he said, 'See the sun is still high! it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep and feed them.' But they said, 'We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we will water the sheep.'

While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she was a shepherdess. Now when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and Laban's sheep, he went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. And when Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son, she ran and told her father.

As soon as Laban heard the report concerning Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him, embraced him, kissed him repeatedly, and brought him to his home. When Jacob told Laban about all these experiences, Laban said to him, 'Surely you are my bone and my flesh.' So he remained with him a whole month.

Then Laban said to Jacob, 'Should you serve me for nothing simply because you are related to me? Tell me what shall be your wages?' Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel, and so he said, 'I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter.' And Laban said, 'It is better for me to give her to you than to give her to any other man. Stay with me.' So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, because he loved her so.

Then Jacob said to Laban, 'Give me my wife, for my time is up, and let me marry her.' So Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. In the evening he took Leah his daughter and brought her to him, and Jacob received her as his wife. Laban also gave his female slave Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid.

When in the morning Jacob found it was Leah, he said to Laban, 'What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?' Laban said, 'It is not customary among us to give the younger in marriage before the elder. Remain with this one during the marriage week, then we will give you the other also for the service which you shall render me during seven more years.' Therefore Jacob did so: he remained with Leah during the marriage week. Then Laban gave him Rachel his daughter to be his wife. Laban also gave his female slave Bilhah to Rachel to be her maid. Then Jacob took Rachel as his wife; but he loved Rachel more than Leah. So he had to serve Laban seven years more.

When Jehovah saw that Leah was spurned, he gave her the gift of motherhood; Rachel, however, was barren. So Leah gave birth to a son whom she named Reuben [Behold a son]; for she said, Jehovah has beheld my affliction; now my husband will love me.' And she gave birth to another son; and said, 'Because Jehovah has heard that I am spurned, he has given me this one also; hence she called his name Simeon [Hearing]. And she gave birth to another son and said, 'Now this time my husband will become attached to me because I have borne him three sons'; therefore his name was called Levi [Attached]. And she gave birth to another son and said, 'This time I will praise Jehovah'; therefore she called his name Judah [Praise]; then she ceased to bear children.

And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel was jealous of her sister and said to Jacob, 'Give me children or else I die.'

Then God remembered Rachel and heard her cry and she gave birth to a son and said, 'God has taken

away my disgrace.' And she called his name Joseph [He will add], saying, 'Jehovah will add to me another son.'

18. Trickery that Again Made Jacob a Fugitive

Now when Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, 'Send me away that I may go to my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, that I may go; for you know the service which I have rendered you.' But Laban said to him, 'If now you will do me the favor, for I have divined that Jehovah has blessed me for your sake, fix for me your wages and I will pay them.' Jacob answered, 'You know how I have served you and what your cattle have become under my charge; for you had little before I came, but now it has greatly increased, for Jehovah has blessed you wherever I went. But now what shall I provide for my household also?' Laban said, 'What shall I give you?' Jacob replied, 'You shall not give me anything at all; if you will do this one thing for me, I will again herd your flock and keep it. I will go through all your flock to-day, removing from it every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and these shall be my wages. So my honesty shall testify against me in time to come; whenever you come to inspect my wages, it will be clear that every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs that is found with me has been stolen.' And Laban said, 'Good, let it be as you say.'

So that day Laban removed the male and female goats that were striped and spotted, that is, every one that had white on it, and all the black ones among the

lambs, and gave them into the charge of his sons. Then he put the distance of a three days' journey between himself and Jacob; and Jacob herded the rest of Laban's flocks.

Now Jacob cut fresh rods of white poplar, of the almond, and of the plane-tree; then he peeled white streaks in them, laying bare the white which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs where the flocks came to drink; and the flocks conceived before the rods, for they conceived when they came to drink. Therefore the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted offspring. Then Jacob separated the lambs and put his own droves apart and did not add them to Laban's stock. And whenever the stronger animals of the flock conceived, Jacob laid the rods in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the animals were weak, he did not put them in; so the weaker were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. By these methods the man grew exceedingly wealthy, and he had large flocks and male and female slaves and camels and asses.

But Jacob heard Laban's sons say, 'Jacob has taken all that was our father's, and from that which was our father's he has acquired all this wealth.' He also observed that Laban's attitude toward him was no longer the same as formerly. So Jacob arose and put his sons and his wives upon the camels, and drove away all his cattle. While Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole the household gods that belonged to her father. Jacob also deceived Laban the Aramean in that he did not tell him that he was fleeing away. So he fled with all that he had, across the river Euphrates, and set out on his way toward Mount *Gilead.*

19. Facing the Misdeeds of Youth

Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir, which is the territory of the Edomites. And he gave this command to them, 'Say to my lord Esau: "Your servant Jacob declares, I have lived with Laban and have stayed until now. I have oxen and asses, flocks and male and female slaves, and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may win your favor."' The messengers returned to Jacob with the report, 'We came to your brother Esau, even as he was coming to meet you with four hundred men.'

Then Jacob was greatly alarmed and distressed. So he divided the people that were with him and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two companies and said, 'If Esau comes to the one company and attacks and destroys it, then the company which is left can escape.'

Jacob also prayed: 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah who saidst to me, "Return to thy country, and to thy kinsmen, and I will do well by thee," I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown thy servant, for with only my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear that he will come and attack me, the mother with the children.'

Then Jacob took from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female asses and ten young asses. These he gave into the charge of his servants,

each drove by itself, and said to them, 'Pass over before me and leave a space between the droves.' He also gave those in front this command: 'When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, "To whom do you belong? and where are you going? and whose are these before you?" then you shall say, "To your servant Jacob; it is a present sent by him to my lord Esau; and he himself is just behind us."' Jacob also commanded the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, 'In this way you shall speak to Esau when you find him, and you shall say, "Moreover your servant Jacob is just behind us."' For he said to himself, 'I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and then when I meet him, perhaps he will receive me.' So the present passed over before him, but he himself spent that night in the camp.

Then he rose up that night and took his two wives, his two slave wives, and his eleven children, and sent them over the ford of the Jabbok.

Jacob was left alone, and one wrestled with him until break of day. When he saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the socket of his thigh and the socket of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. Then he said, 'Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' He replied, 'Jacob.' Then he said, 'Your name shall be no longer Jacob, but Israel [Striver with God]; for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.' And Jacob asked him, 'Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.' And he said, 'Why do you ask my name?' And he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Penuel [Face of God], for he said, 'I have seen God face to face and my life has been preserved.'

But the sun rose as soon as he had passed beyond Penuel, and he limped upon his thigh. This is why to this day the Israelites do not eat the hip muscle, which is at the socket of the thigh, for he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh on the hip muscle.

20. The Reconciliation of Two Brothers

When Jacob looked up, he saw Esau coming with four hundred men. Then he assigned the children to Leah and to Rachel and to the two slave wives. And he put the slave wives and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. Then he himself passed over before them, and he bowed to the ground seven times, as he approached his brother. Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they wept. When Esau looked up and saw the women and the children, he said, 'Who are these with you?' Jacob answered, 'The children whom God has graciously given your servant.' Then the slave wives, together with their children, approached and bowed down. Leah also and her children approached and bowed down, and afterwards Joseph and Rachel approached and bowed down.

Esau said, 'What do you mean by all this company which I met?' Jacob replied, 'To win the favor of my lord.' Esau said, 'I have enough, my brother; keep what you have.' But Jacob replied, 'No, if now I have won your favor, receive my offering from my hand; for I have looked upon your face as one looks upon the face of God, and you have regarded me favorably. Take, I beg of you, my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt generously with me, and I have enough.' So he urged Esau until he took it.

Then Esau said, 'Let us set out on our way, and let me go before you.' But Jacob replied, 'My lord knows that the children are delicate, and I have flocks and herds with their young; if they are overdriven one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord, I beg of you, pass over before his servant, and I will proceed leisurely by stages according to the pace of the cattle which I am driving and of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir.' Then Esau said, 'Let me at least leave with you some of the people who are with me.' But Jacob replied, 'What need is there? Let me only enjoy the favor of my lord.' So Esau turned back that day on his way to Seir.

Then God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel and stay there and build an altar to God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.' So Jacob and all the people who were with him went to Bethel which is in the land of Canaan. But when they set out from Bethel and were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel felt the pains of childbirth. When she was suffering intensely the attendant said to her, 'Do not be afraid, for now you will have another son.' But as her life was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Benoni [Son of my sorrow]; but his father called him Benjamin [Son of the right hand]. So Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), and Jacob set up a pillar over her grave; that is the pillar on Rachel's grave, which stands until this day.

THE JOSEPH NARRATIVES

21. The Victim of Favoritism

Jacob made his home in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived as a resident alien. Joseph at the age of seventeen was a shepherd with his brothers, but he aroused the anger of the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's slave wives, for he brought a bad report about them to their father. Now Jacob loved his son Joseph, who was born in his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his other sons, they hated him and could not speak to him in a friendly manner.

Joseph also had a dream and told it to his brothers, and they hated him still more. This is what he said to them, 'Hear, if you will, this dream which I have had; for as we were binding sheaves in the field, my sheaf rose up and remained standing, while your sheaves came around and bowed down to my sheaf.' His brothers said to him, 'Will you surely be king over us? Will you indeed rule us?' So they hated him still more because of his dreams and his words.

Then he had another dream and told it to his brothers, saying, 'I have had another dream, and it seemed to me that the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me.' But when he told it to his father and his brothers, his father reproved him and said, 'What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed

come to bow down to the earth before you?' Therefore his brothers envied him; but his father kept the matter in mind.

When his brothers went to pasture his father's flocks in Shechem, Jacob said to Joseph, 'Are not your brothers pasturing the flocks in Shechem? Come now, I will send you to them.' He replied, 'I am ready.' So his father said to him, 'Go, see whether all goes well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me back word.' So he sent him out from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. There a certain man found him, as he was wandering in the field, and the man asked him, 'What are you seeking?' He said, 'I am looking for my brothers; tell me, I beg of you, where they are pasturing the flock.' The man said, 'They have gone away, for I heard them say, "Let us go to Dothan."' So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

When they saw him in the distance, before he came to them, they conspired against him to kill him. And they said one to another, 'See, here comes that master-dreamer. Come on, let us kill him, and throw him into one of the pits, and then we will say, "A fierce beast has devoured him"; and we shall see what will become of his dreams!' Judah, however, when he heard it, saved him from their hands by saying, 'Let us not take his life.' Reuben also said to them, 'Do not shed blood; throw him into this pit, that is in the wilderness; but do not harm him,' that he might save him from their hands in order to restore him to his father. Nevertheless, when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his long robe, the robe with sleeves; and they took him and threw him into the pit. But the pit was empty, there being no water in it.

Then they sat down to eat bread, and when they looked up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, and their camels were loaded with spices, resinous gum, and ladanum on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What do we gain if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let us do him no violence, for he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.' So his brothers listened to him; and drawing up Joseph they sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who brought him to Egypt.

Then his brothers took Joseph's robe, killed a he-goat, dipped the long-sleeved robe in the blood, and sent it to their father, saying, 'We found this; see whether it is your son's robe or not.' He recognized it and said, 'It is my son's robe! A wild beast has devoured him! Joseph without doubt is torn in pieces.' Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth about his waist, and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and his daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, saying, 'I shall go down to the grave mourning for my son.' Thus Joseph's father lamented for him.

22. Joseph's Fidelity to His Ideals

Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

Now Jehovah was with Joseph, so that he prospered; and he remained in the house of his master the Egyptian. When his master saw that Jehovah was with him and made everything that he undertook

prosper, Joseph won his confidence and became his personal attendant. He also made him overseer of his household and placed all that he had in his care. From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's household for Joseph's sake, and the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that he had in the house and in the field. Leaving all that he had in Joseph's charge, he knew nothing about his affairs except about the food which he ate. Also Joseph was handsome and attractive.

After these honors had come to Joseph, his master's wife directed her glances toward him and tried to tempt him. But he refused, saying to her, 'See, my master knows nothing about what I do in the house, and he has put all that he has in my charge. No one has greater authority in this house than I, and he has kept back nothing from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wrong and sin against God?' Day after day she tempted Joseph, but he did not listen to her nor accept her advances. One day, however, when he went into the house to do his work and when none of the men of the household were at home, she caught hold of his garment and tried to seduce him; but he left his garment in her hand and fled out of the house.

When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled, she called to the men of her household and said to them, 'See, the master has brought a Hebrew in to insult us. He came to me to ravish me, and I cried aloud; and when he heard me crying aloud, he left his garment with me and ran out of the house.' And she kept his garment by her until his master came home; then she told him the same story, saying, 'The Hebrew servant whom you have brought to us

came to me to insult me; and when I cried aloud, he left his garment with me and fled.'

When Joseph's master heard the statements which his wife made to him, his anger was aroused; and he took Joseph and put him into the prison, in the place where the king's prisoners were confined. So he was left there in prison. But Jehovah was with Joseph and showed kindness to him and enabled him to win the favor of the keeper of the prison, so that he placed all the prisoners in Joseph's charge and made him responsible for whatever they did there.

23. Joseph's Readiness to Help Those in Trouble

After these things the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their master the king of Egypt, so that Pharaoh was angry with these two officers and imprisoned them in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. And the captain of the guard assigned Joseph to them, and he waited on them; and they remained in confinement for some time.

Meanwhile the king of Egypt's butler and baker, who were confined in the prison, both had dreams the same night, each with a peculiar meaning. When Joseph came in to them in the morning, he saw plainly that they were sad. So he asked Pharaoh's officers, 'Why do you look so sad to-day?' They answered, 'We have had a dream and there is no one who can interpret it.' Then Joseph said to them, 'Do not the interpretations of dreams belong to God? Tell them to me, if you will.'

Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph and said to him, 'In my dream I saw a vine before me, and on the vine were three branches, and as if budding,

it put out blossoms, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into his cup and gave the cup to Pharaoh.'

Then Joseph said to him, 'This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days; within three days Pharaoh will release you from prison and restore you to your office, and you will give Pharaoh's cup into his hand as you used to do when you were his butler. But when all goes well with you, remember me, show kindness to me and speak in my behalf to Pharaoh and bring me out of this house; for I was unjustly stolen from the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me in the dungeon.'

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, 'I also saw something in my dream: there were three baskets of white bread on my head, and in the uppermost basket there were all kinds of baked food for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.' Joseph answered, 'This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; within three days Pharaoh will take off your head and hang you on a tree, and the birds shall eat your flesh.'

Now on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants. Then he released the chief butler and the chief baker. He restored the chief butler to his office, so that he again gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand, but the chief baker he hanged, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

24. Joseph's Great Opportunity

Two years later Pharaoh had a dream: as he stood by the Nile, he saw coming up from the Nile seven cows, good-looking and fat, and they had been feeding in the river grass. Then seven other cows came up after them out of the Nile, bad-looking and lean, and they stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. The bad-looking cows ate up the seven good-looking, fat cows. Then Pharaoh awoke.

Afterward he slept and had a second dream and saw seven ears, plump and good, growing up on one stalk. Also seven ears, thin and blasted by the east wind, sprang up after them. The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke, and realized that it was a dream.

In the morning Pharaoh's mind was disturbed; so he sent and called all the magicians and wise men of Egypt and told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them to him.

Then the chief butler said to Pharaoh, 'I now recall my sins: Pharaoh was very angry with his servants and imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. We both had dreams the same night, each with a special meaning. There was also with us a young Hebrew, a servant of the captain of the guard; and we told him and he interpreted our dreams to us, to each man according to his dream. And our dreams came true exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my office, but the other man was hanged.'

Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved his face and changed his clothes and came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I have had a dream, and

there is no one who can interpret it. Now I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.' Joseph answered Pharaoh, 'Not I; God only can give Pharaoh a satisfactory answer.'

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'In my dream as I stood on the bank of the Nile, I saw seven cows, fat and good-looking, which had been feeding in the river grass. And there came up after them seven more cows, thin, and bad-looking and lean, worse than I ever saw in all the land of Egypt; and the lean and bad-looking cows ate up the first seven fat cows; and when they had eaten them up, one could not tell that they had eaten them, for they were still as bad-looking as at the beginning. Then I awoke. Again I dreamed and saw seven ears, plump and good, grow up on one stalk; then seven ears, withered, thin, blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them; and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. I have told the dream to the magicians, but there is no one who can interpret it to me.'

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'Pharaoh's two dreams signify the same thing; God has made known to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years. It is one dream. The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are also seven years, and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind represent seven years of famine. That is why I said to Pharaoh, "God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do." Seven years of great plenty throughout the land of Egypt are coming, and they shall be followed by seven years of famine, so that all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume all that the land produces; and plenty will not be known in the land because

of that famine which follows, for it will be very severe."

'The dream came twice to Pharaoh to indicate that its fulfilment is assured and that God will soon make it come true. Now therefore let Pharaoh select a man who is discreet and wise and place him in control of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh take action and appoint overseers over the land and collect one-fifth of all the produce of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. Let them gather all the food of these good years that come and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them hold it for food in the cities. The food will furnish a supply for the land during the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the people of the land may not perish because of the famine.'

25. The Office Finds the Man

The plan pleased Pharaoh and all his servants; and Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find one like this, a man in whom is the spirit of God?' So Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one so discreet and wise as you. You shall be at the head of my dominion, and all my people shall be ruled as you command, only on the throne I will be superior to you.'

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'See, I have appointed you over all the land of Egypt.' And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his finger and put it upon Joseph's finger and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a golden collar about his neck. He also made him ride in the second-best chariot which he had; and they cried before him, 'Attention!' So he placed him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to

Joseph, 'I am Pharaoh, but without your consent no man shall lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt.' Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah and gave him as a wife Asenath the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. So at the age of thirty Joseph went out as the head of the land of Egypt.

In the seven plenteous years there were bountiful harvests, and Joseph gathered up all the food of the seven plenteous years, which were in the land of Egypt, and stored the food in the cities, putting in each city the products of the fields about it. And Joseph stored up grain as the sand of the sea, in great quantities, until he ceased to keep account, because it could not be measured.

Two sons were born to Joseph and Asenath before the year of famine came. And Joseph named the eldest Manasseh [Making Forget]; for he said, 'God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's household.' He named the second son Ephraim [Fruitful]; for he said, 'God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.'

When the seven years of plenty which had been in the land of Egypt were over, the seven years of famine began, as Joseph had said; and there was famine in all lands, but throughout the land of Egypt there was food, for when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, 'Go to Joseph and do what he tells you.' So when the famine was universal throughout the earth, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold food to the Egyptians: but the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. And the peoples of all lands came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, for the famine was severe throughout the world.

26. The Testing of Joseph's Brother

Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, and he said to his sons, 'Why do you stand looking at each other? I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt; go down there and buy for us, that we may live and not die.' So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's own brother, with his brothers; for he feared that some harm might come to him. So the sons of Jacob went among others to buy grain, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

Now Joseph was the governor over the land; it was he who sold to all the people of the land. Therefore Joseph's brothers came and bowed before him with their faces to the earth. When Joseph saw his brothers, he knew them, but he acted as a stranger toward them and spoke harshly to them and said, 'Where do you come from?' They said, 'From the land of Canaan to buy food.' So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not know him.

Joseph also remembered the dreams which he had had about them and said to them, 'You spies! you have come to see the defenselessness of the land.' But they said to him, 'No my lord; your servants have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man; we are honest men; your servants are not spies.' But he said to them, 'No, you have come to see the defenselessness of the land.' They replied, 'We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; the youngest is to-day with our father, and one is no more.' Joseph said to them, 'It is just as I said to you, "You are spies." By this you shall be tested: as sure as Pharaoh lives you shall not go away unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one

of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain in prison, that it may be proved whether you are telling the truth or not. Or else, as sure as Pharaoh lives, you are indeed spies.' So he put them all into prison for three days.

Then Joseph said to them on the third day, 'Do this, and live, for I fear God: if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain in prison, but you go, carry grain to supply the needs of your households and bring your youngest brother to me. So shall your words be verified, and you shall not die.'

They did as Joseph commanded, but they said to one another, 'We are indeed guilty because of the way we treated our brother, for when we saw his distress and when he pleaded with us, we would not listen; therefore this trouble has come upon us.' Reuben added, 'Did I not say to you, "Do not sin against the boy," but you would not listen? Therefore now his very blood is required.' They did not know, however, that Joseph understood them, for he had spoken to them through an interpreter. But he turned away from them and wept; then he turned back and spoke to them, and, taking Simeon from among them, bound him before their eyes. Then Joseph gave orders to fill their vessels with grain and to restore every man's money to his sack and to give them provision for the journey; and thus it was done to them.

So they loaded their asses with their grain, and departed. And when they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened, saying, 'The man who is master in that land spoke harshly to us and imprisoned us as spies. We said to him, "We are honest men; we are not spies; we are twelve brothers, sons of the same father; one is no longer living, and the youngest is to-day with our

father in the land of Canaan." But the man who is master in that land said to us, "By this shall I know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me and take the grain to supply the needs of your households and depart. Bring your youngest brother to me; then I shall know that you are not spies, but that you are honest men; and I will restore your brother to you and you shall be free to go about in the land."'

As they were emptying their sacks, they found that each man's purse of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their purses filled with money, they were afraid. So their courage failed them and they turned trembling to one another with the question, 'What is this that God has done to us?' Jacob their father said to them, 'You have robbed me of my children: Joseph is no longer living and Simeon is no longer here, and you would take Benjamin also! All this misfortune has overtaken me!' But Reuben said to his father, 'You may put my two sons to death, if I do not bring him to you. Put him in my charge and I will bring him back to you.' Then Jacob said, 'My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead and he only is left. If harm should come to him on the way by which you go, then you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

27. The Moral Awakening of Joseph's Family

The famine was severe in the land; and when Joseph's brothers had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, 'Go again, buy us a little food.' But Judah said to him, 'The man made this definite statement to us: "You shall not see me unless your brother is with you." If you will send

our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food, but if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, "You shall not see me unless your brother is with you."' Jacob said, 'Why did you bring evil upon me by telling the man you had another brother?' They replied, 'The man asked particularly about us and our relatives, saying, "Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?" So we answered his questions as he asked them. How were we to know that he would say, "Bring your brother down"?'

Then Judah said to Jacob his father, 'Send the lad with me, and we will go at once, that both we and you and our little ones may live and not die. I will be surety for him, from my hand you may require him. If I do not bring him to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever; for if we had not lingered, surely we would now have returned the second time.' Therefore their father said to them, 'If it must be so, then do this: take some of the products of the land in your jars and carry down a present to the man, a little balsam, a little syrup, spices, ladanum, pistachio nuts, and almonds. Take twice as much money with you, carrying back the money that was returned in your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake. Take also your brother and go again to the man, and may God Almighty grant that the man may be merciful to you and release Benjamin and your other brother. But if I am robbed of my sons, I am bereaved indeed!' So the men took the present and twice as much money and Benjamin, and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, 'Bring the men into the house, kill animals, and prepare the meal, for these

men will dine with me at noon.' And he did as Joseph directed, and brought the men into Joseph's house. But the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house, and they said, 'We are being brought in on account of the money that was returned in our grain-sacks at our first visit, that he may overwhelm us and fall upon us and take us as slaves, together with our asses.'

So when they came near to Joseph's steward, they spoke to him at the door of the house and said, 'Oh, my lord, we came down the first time only to buy food; and when we reached home, we opened our sacks and discovered every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in its full weight; and we have brought it back with us. We have also brought down with us other money with which to buy food; we do not know who put our money into our sacks.' He replied, 'Peace be to you, fear not; your God and the God of your father has given you the treasure in your sacks; your money came to me.'

Then he brought Simeon out to them. The steward also conducted the men to Joseph's house and gave them water with which to wash their feet, and he gave their asses fodder. Then they made ready the present in anticipation of Joseph's coming at noon, for they had heard that they were to eat there.

When Joseph came into the house, they gave him the present which they had brought and bowed down low before him. He asked them regarding their welfare and said, 'Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still living?' They replied, 'Your servant, our father, is well; he is still alive.' Then they bowed their heads and made obeisance.

When Joseph looked up and saw Benjamin his brother, his own mother's son, he said, 'Is this your

youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?' And he added, 'God be gracious to you, my son.' Then because of his yearning for his brother he sought a place to weep; and he went into his room and wept there. Then he bathed his face and came out and controlling himself he said, 'Bring on the food.' So they brought food for him by himself and for them by themselves and for the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for to do so is abhorrent to the Egyptians. Joseph's brothers were seated before him, the eldest according to his right as the oldest and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked at each other in astonishment. Then Joseph had portions served to them from the food before him; but Benjamin's portions were five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Then he gave this command to the steward of his household: 'Fill the men's grain-sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest and the money too that he paid for his grain.' And he did as Joseph commanded.

As soon as the morning light appeared, the men were sent away, together with their asses. When they had gone out of the city, but were not yet far away, Joseph commanded his steward, 'Follow after the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, "Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you stolen my silver cup, that from which my master drinks and by which he divines? You have done wrong in so doing."'

So the steward overtook them and said these words to them. They said to him, 'Why does my lord speak

such words as these? Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing! Remember that we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in our sacks. Why then should we steal silver or gold from your master's house? Let that one of your servants with whom it is found die, and we will be my lord's slaves.' He said, 'Let it now be as you have said: he with whom it is found shall be my slave; but you shall be innocent.' Then each one hastily took down his sack to the ground and opened it; and the steward searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his ass and returned to the city.

28. Judah's Appeal for Clemency

When Judah and his brothers came back to Joseph's house, he was still there; and they threw themselves before him on the ground. Joseph said to them, 'What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that a man like me can divine with certainty?' Judah replied, 'What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants. See, both we and he also in whose possession the cup was found are my lord's slaves.' But he said, 'Far be it from me that I should do so! The man in whose possession the cup was found shall be my slave; but you yourselves go up in peace to your father.'

Then Judah came close to him and said, 'Oh, my lord, let your servant, I beg of you, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger be kindled against your servant; for you are even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, "Have you a

father or a brother?" And we said to my lord, "We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and as his brother is dead, he is the only son of his mother who is left; and his father loves him." You said to your servants, "Bring him down to me, that I may see him." But we said to my lord, "The boy cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die." Then you said to your servants, "Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see me again."

'When we went up to your servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord; and our father said, "Go again, buy us a little food." But we said, "We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go; for we cannot see the man unless our youngest brother is with us." And your servant, my father, said to us, "You know that my wife bore me two sons; and one went from me, and I said, 'Surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since. If you take this one also from me, and harm befall him, you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Now if I return to your servant, my father, and the boy with whose life his heart is bound up is not with us, then when he sees that there is no boy, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For your servant became surety for the boy to my father, when I said, "If I do not bring him to you, then I will bear the blame before my father forever." Now therefore let your servant, I beg of you, remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord, but let the boy go up with his brothers. For how can I go up to my father, if the boy is not with me, lest I should see the misfortune that would come upon my father.'

29. Joseph's Magnanimity

Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who were standing by him; so he cried out, 'Let every man leave me.' So no man stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. But he wept so loudly that the Egyptians and Pharaoh's court heard.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father yet alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, for they were embarrassed in his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come near to me, I beg of you.' So they came near. And he said, 'I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt. Do not be troubled nor angry with yourselves that you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has already been two years in the land, and there are still five years in which there shall be neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to save you alive through a great deliverance and thus give you descendants on the earth. So now it is not you who sent me here, but God. And he has made me like a father to Pharaoh and master of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

'Go up quickly to my father and say to him, "Your son Joseph says: God has made me master of all Egypt, come down to me without delay. You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me with your children and children's children, with your flocks and your herds and all that you have, for fear that you, together with your household and all that you have, will suffer want; and there I will provide for you, for there will be five more years of famine. Now you and my brother Benjamin see that it is I who am speaking to you. Tell my father all about my

honor in Egypt and what you have seen, and you must quickly bring him down here.'

Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. He also kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

The report that Joseph's brothers had arrived spread in Pharaoh's palace, and it pleased Pharaoh and his servants greatly. Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Say to your brothers, "Do this: load your beasts, go to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the best that the land affords. Now you are commanded to do this: take wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives and bring your father and come. Also pay no attention to your household goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours."' And the sons of Jacob did as commanded.

So Joseph gave them wagons according to Pharaoh's orders and provisions for the journey. To each of them he gave a change of clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothing. And to his father he sent the following gifts: ten asses loaded with the best products of Egypt and ten asses loaded with grain and bread and provisions for his father on the journey.

So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, 'See that you do not quarrel on the journey!' So they went up out of Egypt and came into the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. And they told him, 'Joseph is yet alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt!' Then Jacob's heart stood still, for he could not believe them. But when they told him all that Joseph had said to them and when

he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived, and he said, 'It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.'

30. Joseph's Loyalty to His Family

Then Jacob set out on his journey with all that he had. And he went to Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. God spoke to him in a vision by night and said, 'Jacob, Jacob.' He answered, 'Here am I.' Then he said, 'I am God, the God of your father. Do not fear to go down into Egypt, for there I will make of you a great nation. I myself will go down with you into Egypt; and I will surely bring you up again; and Joseph shall close your dying eyes.'

When Jacob left Beersheba, his sons carried him and their little ones and their wives in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. Jacob also sent Judah before him to Joseph, that he might show him the way to Goshen.

When they came into the land of Goshen, Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to Goshen to meet Jacob his father, and when he presented himself to him Jacob fell on his neck and wept there a long time.

Then Jacob said to Joseph, 'Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive.' But Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, 'I will go up and tell Pharaoh and will say to him, "My brothers and my father's household who were in the land of Canaan have come to me. Now the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of cattle; and they have brought their flocks and cattle and all that they have." When Pharaoh calls you,

and asks, "What is your occupation?" you shall say, "Your servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers," that you may live in the province of Goshen, for every shepherd is looked down upon by the Egyptians.'

Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh and said, 'My father and my brothers with their sheep and cattle and all that they possess have come from the land of Canaan; and now they are in the province of Goshen.' And he took five of his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to them, 'What is your occupation?' And they said to Pharaoh, 'Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers.' They also said to Pharaoh, 'We have come to live in the land, because there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, we beg of you, let your servants stay in the province of Goshen.' Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Let them stay in the province of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, put them in charge of my cattle.'

Joseph also brought in Jacob his father and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh said to Jacob, 'How many years have you lived?' Jacob answered, 'I have lived a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the years of my life, and they have not been as many as those that my forefathers lived on earth.' After Jacob had blessed Pharaoh, he went out from Pharaoh's presence. So Joseph gave his father and his brothers a place to live in and a home in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the province of Goshen, as Pharaoh had commanded.

Joseph also provided food for his father and his brothers and all his father's household according to the

number of the little children. And the Israelites lived in Egypt, in the land of Goshen, and they acquired possessions in it and had many children and became exceedingly numerous.

31. The End of Jacob's Tempestuous Life

When the time drew near for Jacob to die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, 'If now you will do me a favor, put your hand under my thigh and swear that you will act kindly and faithfully with me. Do not bury me, I beg of you, in Egypt; but when I lie down to sleep with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying-place.' Joseph replied, 'I will surely do as you have requested.' Jacob said, 'Give me your oath'; so Joseph gave him his oath; and Jacob bowed toward the head of the bed.

Then Jacob rallied and sat up on the bed and said, 'Bring your two sons to me, and I will bless them.' So Joseph took them both—Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand—and brought them near to him. Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon the head of Ephraim who was the younger and his left hand upon the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands intentionally, for Manasseh was the eldest. He then blessed them, saying, 'The God whom my forefathers Abraham and Isaac revered and served, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long unto this day, the angel who has delivered me from all evil, bless the boys; and let them be known as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.'

But when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him,

and he seized his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's. And Joseph said to his father, 'Not so, my father; this one is the eldest; put your right hand upon his head.' But his father refused and said, 'I know, my son, I know, he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great, but his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a populous nation.' So he blessed them that day and said, 'The Israelites shall invoke a blessing like your own, saying, "God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh."' So he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

And Jacob said to Joseph, 'See, I am about to die; but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers.' Then Jacob drew his feet up into the bed and died and was gathered to his people. And Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept upon him and kissed him.

Then Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Jacob; and forty days were devoted to it, for this is the full period for embalming. The Egyptians also mourned for him seventy days.

When the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the members of Pharaoh's court, saying, 'If now you wish to do me a favor, speak to Pharaoh and say, Joseph's father made him take an oath, saying, See, I am dying; bury me in my grave which I prepared for myself in the land of Canaan.' Now therefore Joseph petitions "Let me go up, I beg of you, and bury my father; after that I will return." Pharaoh said, 'Go up and bury your father, as he made you take oath.'

So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went all the officials of Pharaoh, the elders of his house-

hold, all the elders of the land of Egypt, all the household of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's household. Only their little ones, their sheep, and their cattle they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, so that it was a very great company.

When they came to the bramble field of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, they held there a great and impressive lamentation; and Joseph appointed a period of mourning for his father which lasted seven days. When the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, saw the mourning at the bramble field of Atad, they said, 'This is an impressive mourning among the Egyptians.' That is why that place across the Jordan is called, Ebel-Mizraim [Mourning of the Egyptians].

Then Jacob's sons did for him what he had commanded them: they carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to hold as a place of burial. After he had buried his father, Joseph and his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father returned to Egypt.

32. Joseph's Last Days

When Joseph's brothers realized that their father was dead, they said, 'It may be that Joseph will now hate us and fully punish us for all the evil which we did to him!' And they sent this message to him: 'Your father commanded before he died, "Thus shall you say to Joseph, Forgive, I beg of you, the wrongdoing and sin of your brothers, for they treated you basely." So now we beg of you forgive the wrongdoing of the servants of your father's God.'

While they were speaking to him, Joseph began to weep, his brothers also went and fell down before him and said, 'See, we are your slaves.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for am I in the place of God? You plotted mischief against me, but God intended it for good, in order to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of the lives of many people. Now therefore do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.' Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Joseph remained in Egypt with his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years, and he saw Ephraim's great-grandchildren; the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were borne upon Joseph's knees.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die, but God will surely remember you and bring you up from this land to the land which he promised by an oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Joseph required an oath of the children of Israel, saying, 'When God remembers you, as he surely will, then you shall carry up my bones from here.' So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

EXODUS

THE DELIVERANCE OF THE HEBREWS FROM EGYPT

33. Moses' Training as an Industrial and Religious Leader

After the death of Joseph and his brothers and all that generation, the Israelites increasing rapidly became so numerous and powerful that the land was filled with them. And a new king who did not know Joseph was established upon the throne of Egypt. He said to his people, 'See, the Israelites are becoming too numerous and too powerful for us. Come, let us deal wisely with them, for fear that they become so numerous, that, if war is proclaimed against us, they will join our enemies and fight against us and leave the land.'

So the Egyptians set taskmasters over them to impose burdens upon them; and they built for Pharaoh the store-cities, Pithom and Rameses. But the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more numerous they became and the more they spread everywhere, so that the Egyptians dreaded what they might do. And the Egyptians cruelly enslaved them, making their lives bitter with hard forced labor in mortar and brick and by brutally exacting from them all kinds of forced labor in the field.

And Pharaoh gave this command to all his people, 'You shall throw every son that is born to the Hebrews into the river, but every daughter you shall save alive.'

Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a woman of the same tribe, and she gave birth to a son; and when

she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him for three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took a basket made of papyrus reeds, daubed it with mortar and pitch, and put the child in it. Then she placed it in the reeds by the bank of the river Nile, while his sister remained in sight to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the Nile, and while her attendants were walking along the river's bank, she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her waiting-maid to bring it. When she opened it and saw the child, the boy was crying; and she felt sorry for him and said, 'This is one of the Hebrew children.'

Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call one of the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Go.' So the maiden went and called the child's mother, and Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will pay you your wages.' Then the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child had grown up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son, and she named him Moses, for she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

One time, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his own people; and as he was watching them at their hard labor, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own race. He looked around and seeing that there was no one in sight, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

On the next day Moses went out, and saw two Hebrews struggling together; and he said to the one who was in the wrong, 'Why do you strike your fellow workman?' The man replied, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as

you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid and said, 'What I have done is known!' When Pharaoh heard what had taken place, he endeavored to put Moses to death; but Moses left the country and made his home in the land of Midian.

As he was sitting by a well, the seven daughters of the priest of Midian came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock, but the shepherds came and drove them away. Then Moses stood up and protected the women and watered their flock.

When they came to their father, he said, 'How is it that you have come back so early to-day?' They replied, 'An Egyptian protected us from the shepherds, and besides, he drew water for us and watered the flock.' Then he said to his daughters, 'Where is he? Why have you left the man? Ask him to eat with us.' So Moses consented to make his home with the man; and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter as wife. She bore him a son and he named him Gershom [An alien residing there], for he said, 'I have been an alien living in a foreign land.'

34. Moses' Call to Public Service

Now after a long time the king of Egypt died. Meantime Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the other side of the pasture and came to Horeb the mountain of God. There the angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a thorn bush. As he looked, the bush flamed up without being consumed. Moses said, 'I will stop here and see this wonderful sight, why the bush is not burned up.'

When Jehovah saw that he stopped to look, he called

to him from the midst of the bush, 'Moses, Moses.' Moses answered, 'Here I am.' Then God said, 'Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is sacred ground.' He also said, 'I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Then Moses covered his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

But Jehovah said, 'I have certainly seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry of distress because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land into a land that is beautiful and spacious, to a land abounding in milk and honey. The cry of the Israelites has come to me and I have seen the oppression which they suffer at the hands of the Egyptians. Come now, I will send you to Pharaoh in order that you may bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'

But Moses said to God, 'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He answered, 'I will surely be with you; and this shall be the sign to you that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God upon this mountain.'

Then Moses said to God, 'If I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your forefathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I answer them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHAT I AM'; and he said, 'Declare to the Israelites: "I AM has sent me to you." Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, "Jehovah the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me

and said, I have surely remembered you and seen what is being done to you in Egypt, and I have declared that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to a land abounding in milk and honey." And they shall listen to your voice; and you, together with the elders of Israel, shall go to the king of Egypt, and you shall say to him, "Jehovah the God of the Hebrews has appeared to us. Now let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God." But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless he is compelled by a mighty power. Therefore I will exercise my power and overwhelm Egypt with all the marvellous deeds that I will do in its midst. After that he will let you go.'

Moses said to Jehovah, 'O Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; for I am slow of speech and slow in expressing my ideas.' Jehovah said to him, 'Who has given man a mouth? Or who makes one deaf or dumb, or blind or able to see? Is it not I, Jehovah? Now go, and I will be with you and teach you what you shall speak; and your brother Aaron shall act as your spokesman to the people.'

Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, 'Let me go again to my people in Egypt to see whether they are still alive.' Jethro answered Moses, 'Go, with my blessing.'

35. Pharaoh's Pitiless Industrial Oppression

Then Jehovah said to Aaron, 'Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.' So he went and met him on the mountain of God and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all that Jehovah had sent him to declare, and the signs which he had commanded him to perform.

So Moses and Aaron gathered all the elders of the Israelites, and Aaron proclaimed all the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses. The people believed; and when they heard that Jehovah had remembered the Israelites and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Then Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, 'Jehovah the God of Israel commands, "Let my people go that they may celebrate a feast in my honor in the wilderness."' But Pharaoh said, 'Who is Jehovah that I should obey his command to let Israel go? I do not know Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go.' They said, 'The God of the Hebrews has appeared to us; let us go three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God, that he may not assail us with pestilence or with the sword.' But the king of Egypt replied, 'Moses and Aaron, why do you seek to divert the people from their work? Go to your tasks!' Pharaoh added, 'See, there are now many people in the land, and you would make them cease their tasks!'

The same day Pharaoh gave this command to the taskmasters who were over the people: 'You shall no longer give the people straw for making bricks as heretofore. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. But you shall demand of them the same number of bricks that they have been making heretofore; you shall not reduce the number at all, for they are lazy; that is why they cry out, "Let us go and sacrifice to our God." Let heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may be kept so busy that they will not pay attention to lying words.'

Therefore the taskmasters who were over the people went out and said to them, 'This is Pharaoh's decree, "I will no longer give you straw. Go yourselves, get

straw wherever you can find it; but your work shall not be reduced.'" So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. The taskmasters urged them on saying, 'You must complete your daily task just as when there was straw.' The overseers of the Israelites, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were also beaten and asked, 'Why have you not completed today as yesterday your quota of bricks?'

Then the overseers of the Israelites went to Pharaoh and said, 'Why do you deal in this way with your servants? No straw is given to your servants, and yet they say to us, "Make bricks." See how your servants are beaten and how you wrong your people.' But he said, 'You are lazy, you are lazy; therefore you say, "Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah." Now go and work, for no straw shall be given you, yet you must deliver your quota of bricks.' Then the overseers of the Israelites saw that they were in a bad way when it was said, 'You shall not reduce in the least your daily total of bricks.' So when the overseers met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them as they came away from Pharaoh, they said to them, 'Let Jehovah look upon you and pass judgment, for you have made us so odious in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his courtiers that you have put a weapon in their hand to kill us.'

Then Moses turned again to Jehovah and said, 'Jehovah, why hast thou brought calamity upon this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name he has wronged this people, and thou hast done nothing whatever to deliver thy people.'

Jehovah answered Moses, 'Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for compelled by a mighty power

he shall surely let them go, and compelled by a mighty power he shall drive them out of his land.'

36. Penalties for Industrial Oppression

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Pharaoh is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh early in the morning, as he is going out on the water, and stand by the bank of the Nile to meet him. You shall say to him, "Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you to say: Let my people go that they may worship me in the wilderness, but so far you have not listened. Jehovah declares, By this you shall know that I am Jehovah: Behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand and they shall be changed into blood. The fish too that are in the Nile shall die, and the Nile shall become foul, so that the Egyptians will loathe to drink its water."'

Then Moses lifted up the staff and in the presence of Pharaoh and his courtiers struck the waters that were in the Nile; and all its waters were changed into blood. The fish too that were in the Nile died, and the river became so foul that the Egyptians could not drink its water, but dug round about the Nile for water to drink.

Seven days after Jehovah had afflicted the Nile, he gave this command to Moses, 'Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, "Jehovah commands: Let my people go that they may worship me. If you refuse to let them go, then I will afflict all your territory with frogs; and the Nile shall swarm with frogs which shall go up and come into your house, into your sleeping chamber, upon your bed, and into the houses of your courtiers and upon your people, and into your ovens and knead-

ing troughs; and the frogs shall come up even upon you and your people and all your courtiers."'

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron: "Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come up over the land of Egypt."' So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, 'Make supplication to Jehovah, that he may take away the frogs from me and my people; then I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to Jehovah.' And Moses said to Pharaoh, 'Will you do yourself the honor of informing me at what time I shall make supplication in your behalf and in behalf of your courtiers and people, that the frogs be destroyed from your palaces and be left only in the Nile?' He answered, 'To-morrow.' Then Moses said, 'Be it as you say; that you may know that there is none like Jehovah our God; the frogs shall depart from you, from your palaces, and from your courtiers and people; they shall be left only in the Nile.'

When Moses and Aaron had gone out from Pharaoh, Moses implored Jehovah to remove the frogs which he had brought upon Pharaoh; and Jehovah did as Moses requested. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields, and the people gathered them together into innumerable heaps; and the land was filled with a vile odor. But when Pharaoh saw that a respite had come, he was obdurate and, as Jehovah had said, did not listen to Moses and Aaron.

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Get up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, just as he goes out to the water, and say to him, "Jehovah commands: Let my people go that they may worship me. Other-

wise if you will not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies upon you, upon your courtiers and upon your people, and into your palaces, so that the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, as well as the ground upon which they stand. But at that time I will set apart the land of Goshen in which my people live, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I Jehovah am in the midst of the earth. I will also make a distinction between my people and your people; to-morrow the sign shall be given."'

And Jehovah did so: a vast swarm of flies came upon Pharaoh's palace and into the homes of his courtiers; and all the land of Egypt was devastated by the swarms of flies.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, 'I will let you go that you may sacrifice to Jehovah your God in the wilderness; only you must not go far away. Make supplication in my behalf.' Moses replied, 'I will go out and will make supplication to Jehovah that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his courtiers and from his people to-morrow; only let not Pharaoh again act deceitfully by refusing to let the people go to sacrifice to Jehovah.'

So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to Jehovah. And Jehovah did as Moses asked; but this time also Pharaoh was obdurate and would not let the people go.

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and tell him, "Jehovah the God of the Hebrews commands: Let my people go that they may worship me. For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, then the power of Jehovah will be upon your cattle which are in the field, upon the horses, the asses, the camels, the herds, and the flocks, in the form of a very severe pest;

But Jehovah will make a distinction between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt, and not one that belongs to the Israelites shall die."'

So Jehovah appointed a fixed time, saying, 'To-morrow Jehovah will do this in the land.' And Jehovah did this on the next day, and all the cattle of the Egyptians died; but none of the cattle of the Israelites. Then Pharaoh sent and found that not even one of the cattle of the Israelites was dead; but Pharaoh was stubborn and would not let the people go.

37. The Blighting Effects of Oppression

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Get up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, "Jehovah the God of the Hebrews commands: Let my people go, that they may worship me. Do you still set yourself against my people, in that you will not let them go? To-morrow about this time I will send down a very heavy fall of hail, such as has not been in Egypt from the day that it was founded until now."'

So Jehovah sent down hail upon the land of Egypt and the lightning flashing in the midst of the hail was exceedingly severe, such as had not been before in all Egypt since it became a nation. Through the whole land of Egypt the hail struck down everything that was in the field, both man and beast. The hail also struck down all the vegetation and broke all the trees in the fields. Only in the province of Goshen, where the Israelites were, there was no hail.

Again Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said to them, 'I have sinned this time; Jehovah is right and I and my people are wrong. Make supplication to Jehovah, for there has been enough of these mighty thunderings and hail, and I will let you go,

and you shall stay no longer.' Moses said to him, 'As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to Jehovah; the thunders shall cease, and there shall be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is Jehovah's. But as for you and your courtiers, I know that even then you will not fear Jehovah.'

So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to Jehovah; and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was no longer poured upon the earth. But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders had ceased, he sinned again, and he and his courtiers became stubborn.

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and said to him, 'Jehovah the God of the Hebrews commands: "How long will you refuse to submit to me? Let my people go that they may worship me. For if you refuse to let my people go, then to-morrow I will bring locusts into your territory, and they will cover the surface of the earth, so that one will not be able to see the ground, and they shall eat the rest of that which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat all your trees which grow in the field."'

Then Moses and Aaron were driven out from Pharaoh's presence, but Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt and Jehovah caused an east wind to blow over the land all that day and night. In the morning the east wind brought the locusts, and they went over all the land of Egypt and settled down in all the territory of Egypt, an enormous swarm, more locusts than there ever were before or ever will be again. For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened and nothing green was left, neither tree nor vegetation, throughout all the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses in haste and said, 'I have sinned against Jehovah your God and against you. Now therefore forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication to Jehovah your God, that he may at least take away from me this deadly plague.' So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to Jehovah, and Jehovah caused an exceedingly strong west wind to blow from the opposite direction which took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not a single locust was left in all the territory of Egypt. But Jehovah let Pharaoh's heart remain stubborn, so that he did not allow the Israelites to depart.

38. The Plagues that Broke Pharaoh's Spirit

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, so dark that it may be felt.' So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven; and there was complete darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days; no one could see another, nor did any one move about for three days. But the Israelites had light in their dwellings.

Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, 'Go, worship Jehovah, only let your flocks and your herds remain behind; let your little ones go with you.' But Moses said, 'You must also give us animals for sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God. Our cattle too must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take these to offer to Jehovah our God, and we do not know what we must offer to Jehovah until we arrive there.'

But Jehovah let Pharaoh's heart remain stubborn so that he did not let them go. Therefore Pharaoh

said to him, 'Go away from me; take care that you never appear in my presence again; for on the day that you appear in my presence you shall die.' Moses replied, 'You have spoken truly, I shall never appear in your presence again.'

And Moses said, 'Jehovah declares: "About midnight I will go through all of Egypt; and all the eldest sons in the land of Egypt shall die, from the eldest son of Pharaoh who sits upon his throne, even to the eldest son of the slave girl who is behind the mill, and all the first-born of the cattle. There shall be a great wail of lamentation throughout all the land of Egypt, such as has never been and never shall be again." But not a single dog shall bark against any of the Israelites, against neither man nor beast, that you may know that Jehovah does make a distinction between the Egyptians and Israelites. All these your courtiers shall come to me and bow down before me, saying, "Go away, together with all the people that follow you." After that I will go away.' And he went from Pharaoh in hot indignation.

39. The Institution of the Passover Feast

Then Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 'This month shall be for you the first month of the year. Say to all the assembly of Israel, "On the tenth day of this month every man shall provide for himself a lamb, one for each family. If the family be too small for a lamb, then a man and his next neighbor shall take one together according to the number of persons; and in accordance with each one's ability to eat you shall make your estimate for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male, a year old; you shall take either a sheep or a goat. You

shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; then the whole multitude of the people of Israel shall kill it at dusk. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two door-posts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. On the same night they shall eat the flesh roasted; they shall eat it with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled, but roasted. You shall let nothing of it remain until morning, but you shall burn up any of it that is left.

"'This is the way you shall eat it: with your belt tight about your waist, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste; it is Jehovah's passover." For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night and kill all the eldest in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the mighty of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am Jehovah. The blood shall serve as a sign to indicate the houses where you are; for where I see the blood I will pass over you, and when I afflict the land of Egypt no plague shall come upon you to destroy you.

'"This day shall be a memorial day for you, and you shall keep it as a feast to Jehovah throughout all succeeding generations. You shall observe it as a feast established forever by law. For seven days you shall eat bread made without yeast. Beginning with the first day you shall put yeast out of your houses, for whoever from the first to the seventh day eats bread that contains yeast shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a sacred assembly and also on the seventh day; no kind of work shall be done in them, except that which every man must do to eat."'

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said to them, 'Take lambs from the herds according to your families and kill the passover lamb. You shall

also take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and strike the lintel and the two door-posts with the blood that is in the basin. And not one of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning, for Jehovah will pass through to kill the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood upon the lintel and on the two door-posts, he will pass over the door and will not let the destroyer come into your houses to destroy you. And you and your descendants shall observe this rite as an established custom forever.

'When your descendants shall say to you, "What do you mean by this service?" you shall say, "It is the sacrifice of the passover of Jehovah, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he destroyed the Egyptians and rescued our people."'

Then the people bowed their heads and worshipped; and the Israelites went and did as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron.

40. Israel's Deliverance from Egyptian Despotism

Now at midnight Jehovah destroyed all the eldest sons in the land of Egypt, from the eldest son of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the eldest son of the captive who was in prison. Then Pharaoh arose in the night, together with all his courtiers and the Egyptians, and they set up a great wail of distress, for there was not a house in Egypt in which there was not one dead. And he called Moses and Aaron by night and said, 'Go away from among my people, both you and the Israelites; and go, worship Jehovah as you have asked. Also take with you your sheep and your cattle, as you have requested, and go and ask a blessing for me too.' The Egyptians likewise urged

the people to hasten out of the land, for they said, 'We shall all perish.' So the people took their dough before the yeast had worked, and their kneading troughs were bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

The Israelites set out on foot from Rameses to Succoth; and a mixed multitude went up with them, and they had a great many flocks and herds. They baked unraised cakes of the dough which they had brought with them from Egypt, for it contained no yeast, because they had been driven out of Egypt and could not wait, neither had they prepared for themselves any food for the journey.

Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them on the way toward the land of the Philistines, although that was near, for God said, 'The people might be filled with regret, when they see war, and return to Egypt.' Therefore God led the people around by the way of the wilderness, by the Red Sea; and the Israelites went up armed out of the land of Egypt. Moses also took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had made the Israelites take a solemn oath and had said, 'God will surely remember you, and you shall carry my bones away with you.'

So they made the journey from Succoth and encamped at Etham on the border of the wilderness. Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to show them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, that they might march both by day and by night; the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night stayed in front of the people.

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the feeling of Pharaoh and his courtiers toward them was changed, and they said, 'What have we done in letting the Israelites escape from serving

us?' So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. He also took six hundred chosen chariots and the rest of the chariots of Egypt with captains over all of them; and Jehovah let the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, remain stubborn, so that he pursued the Israelites, for they had set out in defiance of his authority.

When Pharaoh drew near to the Israelites, they looked up and saw the Egyptians marching after them; and they were greatly terrified and cried to Jehovah. And they said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have brought us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you misled us by bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we told you in Egypt, when we said, "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."' But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be frightened, remain firm and you will see the deliverance which Jehovah will effect for you to-day; for as surely as you now see the Egyptians you shall never see them again forever. Jehovah will fight for you, and you are to keep still.'

Then the angel of God who went before the army of Israel changed his position and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also changed its position from in front of them and stood behind them, coming between the army of the Egyptians and the army of the Israelites. On the one side the cloud was dark and on the other side it lighted up the night, so that throughout the entire night neither army came near the other.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and Jehovah by means of a strong east wind caused the sea to go back all that night and made the bed of the sea dry. The Egyptians pursued and all of Pharaoh's

horses, his chariots, and his horsemen went after them into the sea. In the watch before the dawn, Jehovah looked out through the pillar of fire and of cloud upon the army of the Egyptians and threw them into confusion. He also bound their chariot wheels, so that they dragged heavily. Therefore the Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for Jehovah fights for them against us.'

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and toward morning the sea returned to its ordinary level while the Egyptians were flying before it. So Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea, and the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, including all the army of Pharaoh that went after them into the sea, so that not one of them remained. Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day from the power of the Egyptians; and the Israelites saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. The Israelites also saw the mighty work which Jehovah did upon the Egyptians. Therefore the people feared Jehovah and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

41. Song of Thanksgiving

Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand; and as all the women followed her with tambourines and with dancing, she sang responsively with them:

> Sing to Jehovah, for he has triumphed gloriously;
> Both horse and rider has he hurled into the sea.

Moses and the Israelites also sang this song to Jehovah:

I will sing to Jehovah, for he has triumphed gloriously;
Both horse and rider he has hurled into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and song, he has delivered me;
He is my God, I will praise him; my father's God whom I extol.

Jehovah is valiant in war, Jehovah his name;
Pharaoh's chariots and hosts he cast into the water,
In the Red Sea the best of his officers are engulfed;
They have sunk to the depths like a stone, the floods cover them up.

Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is glorious in power,
Thy right hand, O Jehovah, crushes the foe.
By thy great majesty thou overthrowest thine adversaries;
Thou sendest thy punishment, and it consumes them like stubble.
The waters were heaped on high by the blast of thy nostrils,
The surging streams stood still like a stack,
The floods were congealed in the heart of the sea.

The foe said, 'I will pursue them and overtake,
Divide the spoil, and satisfy my lust,
I will draw my sword, and my hand shall destroy them utterly.'
Thou didst blow with thy breath, and the sea then covered them up,
Into the mighty waters they sank like lead.

Who is like thee, Jehovah, among the gods?
Who, like thee, is glorious in holiness?

42. The Solemn Compact Between the Hebrews and Their God

Moses led the Israelites forward from the Red Sea until they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. There they camped beside the water. Then they journeyed from Elim and camped in Rephidim. After they left Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai, and there the Israelites camped before the mountain.

Moses went up into the presence of God, when Jehovah called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Proclaim to the house of Jacob and to the Israelites: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will heed my voice and keep your solemn compact with me, you shall be my own peculiar possession from among all peoples, for all the earth is mine. You shall be a nation of priests, a people consecrated to my service."'

So Moses proceeded to call together the leaders of the people and repeated to them all these words, as Jehovah had commanded him. And all the people answered together, 'We will do all that Jehovah has commanded.'

When Moses reported to Jehovah the words of the people, Jehovah said to him, 'See, I come to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak and may always have confidence in you.' And Jehovah said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash

their garments and be ready on the third day, for on the third day I will come down on Mount Sinai within sight of all the people.'

On the third day, when morning came, there were thunderings and lightnings and a thick cloud rested upon the mountain, and an exceedingly loud trumpet blast sounded, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was wholly enveloped in smoke, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire. And from it smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the entire mountain quaked violently.

Then God spoke all these words: 'I am Jehovah your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from a place where you were slaves.

'YOU SHALL HAVE NO GODS EXCEPT ME.

'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF A GRAVEN IMAGE, nor any image of anything that is in the heavens above, on the earth beneath, or in the waters that are under the earth. You shall not bow down before them, nor serve them, for I Jehovah your God am a jealous God who lets the consequences of the sins of the fathers fall upon their descendants to the third and fourth generation, but who does acts of kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commands.

'YOU SHALL NOT USE THE NAME OF JEHOVAH YOUR GOD PROFANELY, for Jehovah will not leave him unpunished who uses his name profanely.

'REMEMBER THE DAY OF REST AND KEEP IT SACRED. You shall labor six days and do all your work; but the seventh day is the day of rest of Jehovah your God. In it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor

your female servant, nor your cattle, nor the guest who is with you; for in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the day of rest and made it different from other days.

'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER, that you may live long on the land which Jehovah your God gives you.

'YOU SHALL NOT MURDER.

'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

'YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

'YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.

'YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSEHOLD: you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.'

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.'

43. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TENT OF MEETING

Jehovah said to Moses, 'Command the Israelites to take for me a special offering; you shall take my offering from every one who makes it willingly; and make for me a sanctuary that I may live among you.'

So every one whose heart inspired him and whose spirit made him willing to give brought Jehovah's special offering for the construction of the tent of meeting and for its service and for the sacred garments.

Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiah and every workman whom Jehovah had gifted with wisdom and

every one whose heart impelled him to do the work. They received from Moses all the special offerings which the Israelites brought in order to make the things required for the service of the sanctuary. So all the skilful men who did the work made the dwelling-place for Jehovah.

Moses used to take the tent and set it up at some distance outside the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And whenever any one wished to consult Jehovah he would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked at Moses until he went into the tent. Then when Moses had entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the tent while Jehovah spoke with Moses; and whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the door of his tent, all the people stood and worshipped, every man at his tent door. And Jehovah spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young attendant, Joshua the son of Nun, did not leave the tent.

44. The Beginning of Law and Judicial Organization

When Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how Jehovah had led Israel out of Egypt, he brought Moses' sons and wife to him in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God. Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed before him, and kissed him, and when they had asked regarding each other's welfare, they went into

the tent. Then Moses told his father-in-law all that Jehovah had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardships they had encountered on the march, and how Jehovah had delivered them. Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which Jehovah had showed to Israel in freeing them from the power of the Egyptians. He also took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron with all the leaders of Israel came in to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

On the next day Moses sat as judge to decide cases for the people, and the people stood about him from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, 'What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand about you from morning until evening?' Moses answered his father-in-law, 'Because the people come to me to inquire of God. Whenever they have a matter of dispute, they come to me, and I decide between them and make known to them the statutes and laws of God.'

Then Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'The thing which you are doing is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out, for the task is too heavy for you; you are not able to do it by yourself alone. Now listen to me, I will give you counsel, and may God be with you! You be the people's advocate before God and bring the disputed cases to him. Teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way they should act and the work they must do.

'Moreover you should provide out of the ranks of the people able, God-fearing, reliable men, who hate unjust gain, and place them over the people as officials

over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. Let them act as judges for the people at all times; let them bring to you every important case, but let them decide every minor case themselves; so it will be easier for you, and they will relieve you. If you do this—and God commands you to—then you will be able to carry on the work, and all these people too will go to their homes satisfied.'

So Moses followed the advice of his father-in-law and did all that he had suggested: Moses chose able men from among the Israelites, and made them heads over the people, officials over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. They acted as judges for the people at all times; the difficult cases they brought to Moses, but every minor case they decided themselves. Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he returned to his own land.

45. The School of Hardship

Now the entire body of the Israelites complained in the wilderness against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, 'Better that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, while we had as much food to eat as we wanted; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger.'

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'Now I will rain down food from heaven for you. The people shall go out and gather one portion each day, that I may test them to see whether they will live according to my law or not. On the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.' Moses and Aaron said to the Israelites, 'At evening you shall know that Jehovah has brought

you out from the land of Egypt and in the morning you shall see the glory of Jehovah, because he has heard your complaints against him; for what are we that you complain against us?'

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp. When the layer of dew evaporated, there was over the surface of the wilderness a small, flaky thing, fine as the hoar-frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it they said to each other, 'What is it?' for they did not know what it was. But Moses said to them, 'It is the food which Jehovah has given you to eat.' So they gathered it every morning, each man as much as he could eat, and when the sun became hot, it melted.

On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather it, but they found none. Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'How long do you refuse to keep my commands and my laws?' So the people rested on the seventh day. And the Israelites called the food manna. It was white like coriander seed, and its taste was like wafers with honey. The Israelites ate manna forty years until they came to an inhabited land.

Once when the people contended with Moses and said, 'Give us water that we may drink,' he said to them, 'Why do you contend with me? Why do you test Jehovah?' But as the people thirsted for water, they complained against Moses and said, 'Why have you brought us up from Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?'

Then Moses cried to Jehovah, saying, 'What shall I do to this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' Jehovah said to Moses, 'Pass before the people and take with you some of the leaders of Israel; and

in your hand take the rod with which you struck the river and go. I will stand there before you upon a rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock and water shall come out of it that the people may drink.'

Moses did so in the presence of the leaders of Israel; and he called the name of the place Massah [Testing] and Meribah [Contention], because of the contention of the Israelites and because they tested Jehovah, saying, 'Is Jehovah among us or not?'

NUMBERS

THE QUEST FOR A HOME

46. The Selection of Religious Leaders

Jehovah said to Moses, 'Speak to Aaron and his sons and say, "This is the way you shall bless the Israelites:

> Jehovah bless you and guard you;
> Jehovah be favorably disposed and gracious to you!"'

And Jehovah said to Moses, 'Call seventy of the leaders of Israel, whom you know to be leaders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting that they may stand there with me. I will come down and speak with you there; and I will take some of the spirit which is upon you and put it upon them, and they shall assist you in bearing the burden of the people, that you may not bear it alone.'

So Moses called seventy of the leaders of the people and had them stand about the tent. Then Jehovah came down in a cloud and spoke to him and took some of the spirit which was upon him and put it upon the seventy leaders. When the spirit rested upon them, they spoke in ecstasy, nor did they cease doing so.

Two men, however, of those who had been selected among the leaders, remained in the camp. The name of the one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. Although they had not gone out to the tent the spirit rested upon them and they spoke in ecstasy within the camp.

Then a young man ran and told Moses, 'Eldad and Medad are speaking in ecstasy within the camp.' Joshua the son of Nun, who had from his youth been the assistant of Moses, spoke up and said, 'Moses, my lord, forbid them.' But Moses said to him, 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, and that Jehovah would put his spirit upon them.'

47. The Conflicting Reports of the Hebrew Spies

Moses sent certain men to explore the land of Canaan and said to them, 'Go up into the South Country and on into the highlands, and see what the land is and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, and whether the land in which they live is good or bad, and what kinds of cities they live in, whether in camps or in strongholds. See whether the land is fertile or barren, whether there is wood in it or not. Be courageous and bring some of the fruit of the land,' for the season was the time of the first ripe grapes.

So they went up to the South Country and came to Hebron; and Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) When they came to the valley of Eshcol, they cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes and carried it away on a frame borne by two men; and they took also some pomegranates and figs. That place was called the valley of Eshcol [Grape Cluster] because of the cluster which the Israelites cut down there.

Then they returned to Moses and Aaron and all the Israelites at Kadesh and brought back word to them

and showed them the fruit of the land. They reported to Moses, 'We went to the land to which you sent us; and it indeed abounds in milk and honey; and this is some of its fruit. But the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are very large and fortified; moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the South Country and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites in the highlands, and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the Jordan.'

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession of it, for we are well able to conquer it.' But the men who had gone up with him said, 'We are not able to conquer the people, for they are stronger than we, and all the people whom we saw there are exceedingly tall and large. There we saw the giants; we were as grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were to them.'

All the people wept that night and cried out, 'Why did Jehovah bring us to this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be taken captive. Were it not better for us to return to Egypt?' So they said to one another, 'Let us appoint a chief and return to Egypt.'

Then Moses and Aaron prostrated themselves before all the assembled Israelites, and Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the assembled Israelites, 'The land which we went to explore is an exceedingly good land. If Jehovah is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which abounds in milk and honey. Only do not rebel against Jehovah; fear not the people of the land for they are our source of supply. Their defense is taken away from over them, and Jehovah is

with us; fear them not.' But the people would not trust Jehovah.

48. The Penalty for the People's Lack of Faith

Then Jehovah said to Moses, 'How long will this people scorn me? How long will they refuse to trust me in spite of all the signs which I have performed in their midst? I will afflict them with a pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make you and your clan a nation greater and mightier than theirs.' But Moses said to Jehovah. 'When the Egyptians hear it (for thou broughtest this people by thy might from their midst), they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that thou, O Jehovah, art in the midst of this people, and that thou, O Jehovah, dost appear visibly, and that thy cloud stands over them, and that thou goest before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt put all this people to death, then the nations which have heard about thee will say, "Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which he promised to them with an oath, he has slain them in the wilderness." But now let my Lord exert his great power, for as thou hast said, "Jehovah is slow to show anger and full of loving-kindness, forgiving guilt and wrong-doing, although he does not leave them unpunished, but visits the guilt of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations." Pardon, I pray thee, the guilt of this people according to thy great loving-kindness, even as thou hast forgiven them from the time they left Egypt even until now.'

Jehovah said, 'I have pardoned as you have requested; but as surely as I live and as surely as the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah,

none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness and yet have tested me these ten times and have not listened to my voice shall see the land which I have promised with an oath to their fathers, neither shall any of those who scorn me see it. But I will bring my servant Caleb to the land to which he went, because he has been animated by another spirit and has fully followed me, and his descendants shall possess it. But your little ones, who, you said, would be captives of war, I will bring in, and they shall possess the land which you have rejected. Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and your children shall be wanderers there forty years and shall suffer for your unfaithfulness until your carcasses have all decayed in the wilderness.'

49. The Advance Toward the East-Jordan

Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom with this message: 'Your kinsmen the Israelites say, "You know all the hardship that has befallen us: how our fathers went down into Egypt and we lived in Egypt a long time, and how the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. But when we cried to Jehovah, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. Now we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory. I beg of you, let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field nor vineyard, nor will we drink of the water of the wells. We will go along the main highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left until we have passed your border."'

Edom answered the Israelites, 'You shall not pass through my territory, for if you do, I will come against

you with the sword.' The Israelites said to the king of Edom, 'We will go up by the main highway, and if we and our cattle drink of your water, we will pay the price of it. Only we should like to pass through on foot and no harm will be done.' But the king of Edom said, 'You shall not pass through.' And Edom came out against Israel with a mighty army and a strong force. Thus Edom refused to permit Israel to pass through his territory and Israel turned away from him.

Then the Israelites journeyed from Kadesh by the way leading to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient because of the journey. They complained openly against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread and no water, and we loathe this vile food.'

Then Jehovah sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many of the Israelites died. Then the people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned in that we have complained against Jehovah and against you. Intercede with Jehovah that he take away the serpents from us.' So Moses interceded for the people; and Jehovah said to Moses, 'Make a poisonous serpent and set it on a pole; then any one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.' So Moses made a serpent of bronze and set it upon a pole, and thereafter, if a serpent had bitten any one and the man looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

Then the Israelites camped in the wilderness east of Moab. From there they travelled on and camped in the valley of the brook Zered. After journeying from there they camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness which stretches out from the

territory of the Amorites, for the Arnon is the boundary between Moab and the Amorites.

From there the Israelites journeyed to Beer [Well]. That is the well where Jehovah said to Moses, 'Gather the people together and I will give them water.' Then Israel sang this song:

Spring up, O well; sing a song to it,
To the well which the chieftains dug,
Which the nobles of Israel delved,
With the leader's wand, with their staffs.

50. The Victories over the Amorites

Then Israel sent this message to Sihon, king of the Amorites, 'Let me now pass through your land. We will not turn aside into field or vineyard; we will not drink from the water of the wells. We will go along the main highway, until we have passed through your territory.' Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory, but gathered all his people together and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and he came to Jahaz, where he fought against Israel. But Israel defeated him in battle and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the territory of the Ammonites, for Jazer was the border of the Ammonites. Israel also took all these cities and lived in the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in its dependent villages; for Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and taken all his land away from him as far as the Arnon. Therefore the bards sing:

Come to Heshbon; build it again;
Restore the city of Sihon.

For fire went out from Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon;
It devoured Ar of Moab,
The lords of the heights of Arnon.
Woe unto you, O Moab!
Undone are you, people of Chemosh,
Who let his sons become fugitives,
Gave up his daughters as captives
To Sihon the king of the Amorites.

So Israel lived in the land of the Amorites. And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and captured it and dispossessed the Amorites who were there. And Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he lived in it. Jair the son of Manasseh also went and captured their tent-villages and called them the Tent-villages of Jair.

51. Balaam's Obligation to Tell the Truth

Now Moab began to be afraid of the Israelites. Therefore Moab said to the leaders of Midian, 'This multitude will devour all that is around us, as the ox devours the grass of the field.' Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time, and he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, to Pethor on the river, to the land of the Ammonites, saying, 'A people has come out from Egypt; they have spread over the earth and have settled next to me. Come, I beg of you, curse this people for me (for they are too strong for me), so that I shall be able to withstand them and drive them out of the land, for I know that whoever you bless is blessed and whoever you curse is cursed.'

Then the leaders of Moab and leaders of Midian departed with the fee for cursing in their hands; and when they came to Balaam, they repeated to him

Balak's words: 'I will confer great honor upon you, and whatever you tell me I will do. Come therefore, curse this people for me.' Balaam answered the servants of Balak, 'If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do more or less than what Jehovah my God commands me.'

Then he saddled his ass and went with them. But God's anger was aroused because he was going, and the angel of Jehovah placed himself in the way to oppose him. Balaam was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him; and when the ass saw the angel of Jehovah standing in the road with his drawn sword in his hand, she turned aside out of the way and went into the field. Then Balaam struck the ass in order to turn her into the road. But the angel stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, where there was a wall on each side. When the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, she pressed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again.

Then the angel of Jehovah went further and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or the left. When the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, she lay down under Balaam; and Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the ass with his staff. Then Jehovah opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you, that you should have struck me these three times?' Balaam said to the ass, 'Because you have made sport of me; I would that there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you.' The ass said to Balaam, 'Am I not your ass on which you have ridden all your life long until to-day? Have I ever been in the habit of treating you in this way?' He answered, 'No.'

Then Jehovah opened Balaam's eyes, and when he saw the angel of Jehovah standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, he bowed his head and fell on his face. The angel of Jehovah also said to him, 'Why have you struck your ass these three times? See, it is I who have come to oppose you; you rushed forward against me, but the ass saw me and turned aside before me these three times. Unless she had turned aside from me, surely now I would have killed you and saved her life.' Then Balaam said to the angel of Jehovah, 'I have sinned; for I did not know that you stood in the way against me. Now therefore if my going displeases you, I will return home.' But the angel of Jehovah said to Balaam, 'Go with the men; but only speak what I tell you!' So Balaam went with Balak's officers.

52. An Early Ideal of National Glory

When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at Ir of Moab, which is on the extreme boundary formed by the Arnon, and said to him, 'Did I not send to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?' Then Balaam said to Balak, 'See, I have come to you. Have I now any power to speak anything? I will speak the word which God puts in my mouth.'

So Balaam went with Balak, who took him to the top of Peor, which looks out over the wilderness of Judah. When Balaam saw that Jehovah was pleased to bless Israel, he did not go to consult omens, as he was accustomed to do, but turned toward the wilderness; and as he looked, he saw the Israelites camped according to their tribes. And the spirit of God came upon him and he uttered this oracle:

The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
The oracle of him whose eye is opened,
The oracle of him who hears God's words,
Who sees the vision of God Almighty,
He who though prostrate has open eyes:

How beautiful your tents, O Jacob,
Your dwelling-places, O Israel!
Like valleys they are spread out,
Like gardens by the river side,
Like aloes which Jehovah has planted,
Like cedars beside the waters.

God who brought him forth out of Egypt
Is for him like the strength of the wild-ox.
He shall devour the nations, his adversaries,
And shall break their bones in pieces,
Piercing them through with his arrows.

He crouches, lies down like a lioness;
Like a lion; who dares stir him up?
Blessed are all who bless you,
And accursed are all who curse you!

Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, 'I called you to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them repeatedly. Now therefore, hasten back to your home. I intended to confer great honor upon you; but, as it is, Jehovah has kept you from receiving honor.' But Balaam said to Balak, 'Did I not say to your messengers whom you sent to me, "If Balak should give his house full of silver and gold, I could not go contrary to the word of Jehovah, to do either good or bad of my own will? I must speak what Jehovah says." Now I am going to my people. Come, let me tell you what this people

shall do to your people in days to come.' So he uttered his oracle and said:

The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
The oracle of him whose eye is opened,
The oracle of him who hears God's word,
And possesses the knowledge of the Most High,
Who sees the vision of God Almighty,
He who though prostrate has open eyes:

I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near;
A star comes forth out of Jacob,
And a sceptre arises from Israel,
And shatters the temples of Moab,
And the skulls of the sons of pride.
Of Edom he shall take possession,
And Seir, his foe, shall be conquered,
Through Israel's deeds of valor.
Out of Jacob shall one have dominion,
And destroy those who flee from the city.

53. The Loyalty of the East-Jordan Tribes

Now the Reubenites and the Gadites had a great number of cattle. So, when they saw that the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead was adapted to cattle, the Gadites and the Reubenites went to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the heads of the congregation and said, 'If we are favorably regarded by you, let this land be given to your servants as a possession; do not take us across the Jordan.' But Moses said to the Gadites and to the Reubenites, 'Shall your kinsmen go to war while you remain here? Why should you discourage the Israelites from going over into the land which Jehovah has given them? This is what your

fathers did, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to inspect the land.'

Then the people came near to him and said, 'We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle and cities for our little ones, but we ourselves will be armed and ready to go before the Israelites until we have brought them to their place, while our little ones remain in the fortified cities, because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return to our homes until every Israelite has entered into possession of his inheritance. For we will have no inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this, the eastern side of the Jordan.'

Then Moses said to them, 'If you will do this, if you will arm yourselves to go to battle before Jehovah and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before Jehovah until he has driven out his enemies before him and the land is subdued before him, then afterwards you may return and in the judgment both of Jehovah and of Israel be free from all obligation; and this land shall be yours as a possession before Jehovah. But if you will not do so, then you have sinned against Jehovah, and know that your sin will find you out. Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do that which you have promised.' Then the Gadites and the Reubenites said to Moses, 'Your servants will do as our lord commands. Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle shall remain there in the cities of Gilead, but your servants will pass over, every man armed for war to battle before Jehovah, as my lord says.'

DEUTERONOMY

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A STABLE NATIONAL LIFE

54. The Meaning of Israel's Experiences

These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan: 'You shall remember all the experiences through which Jehovah your God led you during these forty years in the wilderness, that he might make you humble and that he might test you and know what is in your heart, and whether you would keep his commands or not. He made you humble and let you feel hunger and then fed you with manna with which neither you nor your forefathers were familiar, that he might make you know that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of Jehovah.

'The clothing that you wore did not wear out, neither did your feet blister these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so Jehovah your God is disciplining you.

'Keep the commands of Jehovah your God, to live in the ways which he approves and to revere him. For Jehovah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams of water, with fountains and deep springs gushing forth on vale and hill, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates, a land of olive-trees and honey, a land where you may eat food in abundance and lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you

may dig copper. You shall eat and be satisfied and give praise to Jehovah your God for the good land which he has given you.

'Take care that you do not forget Jehovah your God, and fail to observe his commands, his ordinances, and his statutes which I command you this day. And, when you have food enough to eat and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks, your silver and your gold and all that you have increase, take care that you are not filled with pride and forget Jehovah your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness in which there were venomous serpents and scorpions and the desert where there was no water, and who brought you water out of the flinty rock. Take care that you do not say in your heart: "My power and the might of my hand have won this wealth for me." But you shall remember Jehovah your God, for it is he who gives you power to win wealth, that he may carry out, as he is doing this day, the solemn agreement which he swore to your forefathers to fulfil.

'But if you forget Jehovah your God and follow other gods and serve them and worship them, I warn you this day that you will surely perish. You shall perish like the nations that Jehovah destroyed before you, because you will not listen to the voice of Jehovah your God.

'But if you will listen attentively to the voice of Jehovah your God, to observe and do all his commands which I command you this day, your God will set you far above all the nations of the earth. You shall be blessed in the city and in the field. Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the fruit of your lands and the offspring of your cattle, the increase of your

herd, and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading-trough. Blessed shall you be when you go out, and blessed shall you be when you return from your toil.

'Jehovah will cause your enemies that attack you to be vanquished before you; they shall come out against you one way, but shall flee before you seven ways. Jehovah will command his blessing upon you in your harvest and in all that you undertake, and he will bless you in the land which he gives you. Jehovah will make you a people consecrated to himself, as he has solemnly promised you, provided that you keep the commands of Jehovah your God and live in accordance with his laws.

'All the peoples of the earth shall see that you bear the name of Jehovah, and shall stand in awe of you. Jehovah will give you abounding prosperity in the offspring of your body and of your cattle, and in the fruit of your land, in the land which Jehovah swore to your fathers to give you. Jehovah will open to you his good treasure in the heavens to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. Jehovah will make you the head, not the tail, and you shall always tend upward rather than downward, if you will heed the commands of Jehovah your God, which I command you this day, to observe and do them.

'For the land of which you are going to take possession is not like the land of Egypt, from whence you came, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it as you do a vegetable garden. The land of which you are going to take possession is a land of hills and valleys and drinks water as the rain of heaven comes down. It is a land for which Jehovah your God cares,

for he is ever watching over it from the beginning to the end of the year.'

55. Moses' Final Charge to His People

Then Moses said to all the Israelites, 'I am a hundred and twenty years old this day. I can no longer go out and come in, and Jehovah has said to me, "You shall not go over this Jordan." Jehovah your God is going over before you; he will destroy these nations before you, and you shall drive them out; and Joshua is going over to lead you as Jehovah has commanded. Jehovah will do to them and to their land as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites whom he destroyed. He will deliver them up before you and you shall do to them exactly as I have commanded you. Be courageous and strong, fear not, neither be terrified before them, for Jehovah your God is leading you; he will not fail you nor forsake you.'

Moses also called Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, 'Be courageous and strong, for you shall bring this people into the land which Jehovah has sworn to their fathers to give them; and you shall cause them to inherit it. Jehovah is going before you; he will be with you, he will not fail nor forsake you; fear not, nor be dismayed.'

Then Moses went up on the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo to the summit of Pisgah opposite Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land, even Gilead as far as Dan, and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean, and the South Country and the circular basin that includes the valley about Jericho, the City of Palms, and extends as far as Zoar. Jehovah said to him, 'This is the land which I have promised

with an oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, saying, "I will give it to your descendants." I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not go over there.'

So Moses, the servant of Jehovah, died there in the land of Moab as Jehovah had said. And Jehovah buried him in the ravine in the land of Moab in front of Bethpeor; but to this day no man knows his burial-place. Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, but his eye was not dim nor had he lost his vigor. The Israelites wept for Moses on the plain of Moab thirty days, and then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the Israelites listened to him and did as Jehovah commanded Moses. But in Israel no prophet had yet arisen whom Jehovah knew intimately as he did Moses.

JOSHUA

THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN

56. Joshua's Preparations for the Conquest of Jericho

After the death of Moses, Jehovah said to Joshua, Moses' attendant, 'Moses my servant is dead: Now arise, go over the Jordan with all this people to the land which I am about to give to the Israelites. As long as you live no one will be able to resist you. As I was with Moses, so I shall be with you: I will not fail you nor forsake you. Be brave and strong, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I solemnly promised their fathers I would give them. Only be brave and strong to observe faithfully all the law, as Moses my servant commanded you. Turn not from it to the right nor to the left, and you shall have success wherever you go. Have I not commanded you? Be brave and strong; fear not nor be afraid, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.'

Then Joshua gave this order to the officers who were over the people: 'Go throughout the camp and give this command: "Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in and take possession of the land which Jehovah your God has given you as your own."'

While Joshua was at Shittim he secretly sent two men as spies, commanding them: 'Go, explore the land and especially Jericho.' So they went and entered the house of a harlot named Rahab, and remained there.

It was reported to the king of Jericho, 'Some men

came here to-night from the Israelites to explore the land.' Therefore the king of Jericho sent to Rahab and said, 'Bring out the men who entered your house, for they have come to explore all the land.'

Now the woman had taken the two men and hidden them; so she said, 'It is true, some men came to me, but I did not know where they came from. When the time arrived to shut the gate at nightfall, the men went out and I do not know where they have gone. Pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.' She, however, had brought them up to the roof and concealed them with the stalks of flax which she had spread out there. So the men of Jericho pursued them in the direction of the fords of the Jordan; and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was closed.

The spies had hardly lain down when Rahab came up to them on the roof and said, 'I know that Jehovah has given you the land and that the terror which you have inspired has seized us and that because of you all the inhabitants of the land are losing heart. Now therefore swear to me by Jehovah, since I have treated you with kindness, that you will also treat my family kindly, and give me an assurance that you will preserve the lives of my father, my mother, my brothers, and my sisters, together with all that they have, and will save us from death.' The men said to her, 'We are ready to give our lives for you, if you do not disclose our business; and when Jehovah gives us the land, we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.'

Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house in which she lived was built into the city wall. She said to them, 'Go into the hills, that the pursuers may not overtake you, and hide yourselves there three days until they have returned.

Then you may go on your way.' The men said to her, 'We shall be absolved from this oath which you have made us swear to you, unless, when we come into the land, you bind this cord of scarlet thread in the window through which you let us down and gather your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your family into your house. If any one goes out of the doors of your house into the street, he shall be responsible for his death and we shall be innocent. If any one stays with you in the house, we will be responsible for his death if any one lays hands upon him. But if you disclose this business of ours, we shall be absolved from the oath which you have made us swear.' She replied, 'Let it be as you say.' So she sent them away; and when they were gone, she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

So they left and went into the hills and stayed there three days until the pursuers had returned. The pursuers sought for them in every direction but did not find them. Then the two men came down from the hills, crossed the river, and came to Joshua and told him all that had happened to them.

57. The Crossing of the Jordan

Joshua rose up early in the morning and set out from Shittim; and he and all the Israelites came to the Jordan and spent the night there before crossing. And Joshua said to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves, for to-morrow Jehovah will do wonders among you. Come and hear the words of Jehovah your God. By this you shall know that a living God is with you: the ark of the Lord of all the earth is about to pass over before you into the Jordan. When the priests who bear the ark of the Lord of all the earth step into the

waters of the Jordan, its waters shall be cut off, so that the waters that come down from above will stand still in a heap.'

So when the people left their tents to pass over the Jordan, the priests, who were carrying the ark that symbolized Jehovah's compact with his people, were in front of them. And when the bearers of the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who were carrying the ark dipped in the brink of the water —for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the harvest time—the waters that came down from above stood still and its waters rose in a heap a long distance up the river at Adam, the city that is near Zarethan; and the waters that went down toward the sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea) were wholly cut off, while the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests who were carrying the ark of Jehovah stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until the whole nation had completed the crossing of the Jordan.

When the whole nation had crossed, Jehovah said to Joshua, 'Command them to take from the middle of the Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood, twelve stones and carry them over with you and lay them down in the camping-place, where you pass the night, that this may be a reminder to them. Then when your children ask from time to time: "What do these stones mean to you?" you shall say to them, "They are reminders that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of Jehovah, when it passed over the Jordan." These stones shall be a constant reminder to the Israelites.'

So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded and took up out of the middle of the Jordan twelve stones corresponding to the number of the tribes of the Israelites.

And they carried them over with them to the place where they camped and laid them down there.

Then the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.

58. The Capture of Jericho

Now Jericho had closed its gates because of the Israelites, and no one went in or out. But Jehovah said to Joshua, 'See, I have given Jericho to you with its king and its able warriors. You shall march around the city, all the soldiers going about the city once. You shall do this for six days, and on the seventh day the people shall make the attack, each man going up straight before him.'

Then Joshua said to the people, 'March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of Jehovah. You shall not shout the battle-cry nor let your voice be heard; not a word shall escape from your mouth until the day I bid you, "Shout the battle-cry"; then you shall shout!'

So he had the ark of Jehovah carried around the city once; then they returned to the camp and spent the night there. The second day they also marched around the city once and returned to the camp. Thus they did six days. The seventh day they rose early at dawn and made the circuit of the city in the same way, only on that day they marched about the city seven times. The seventh time the priests blew the trumpets, and Joshua said to the people, 'Shout the battle-cry; for Jehovah has given you the city. The city and all that is in it shall be sacrificed to Jehovah; only Rahab the harlot and those who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.'

So the people shouted the battle-cry and the fell down and they went straight up into the city captured it. Then they completely destroyed by sword all that were in the city, including man woman, young and old, ox and sheep and ass. Joshua spared the lives of Rahab the harlot and father's family and all that she had, because she the messengers whom Joshua sent to explore Jeri and they have lived among the Israelites even to day.

JUDGES

THE PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT

59. The Victory That Gave the Hebrews Independence

The Kenites went up from the City of Palms [Jericho] with the Judahites into the wilderness of Judah; and Jehovah was with the tribesmen of Judah, so that they gained possession of the highlands; but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the plains because they had iron chariots.

When the tribesmen of Joseph went to explore Bethel, the men who were on the watch saw a man coming out of the town, and they said to him, 'Show us the way to enter the town and we will treat you kindly.' So he showed them the way. They then put the inhabitants of the town to death, but they let the man and all his family go.

The tribe of Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, nor Megiddo and their dependent towns; but the Canaanites maintained their control of that region.

The tribe of Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live among them. The tribe of Zebulun also did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron and Nahalol; but the Canaanites continued to live among them and became subject to forced labor. Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, and Rehob; but the Asherites lived

among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, for they could not drive them out. So the Israelites lived among the Canaanites and intermarried with them and worshipped their gods.

Then Eglon the king of Moab called in as his allies the Ammonites and the Amalekites and went up against the Israelites, defeated them, and took possession of the City of Palms. But the Israelites implored Jehovah, and he inspired Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, to deliver them.

After Ehud died the Israelites did that which displeased Jehovah; and Sisera, who had nine hundred iron chariots, cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years. Then the prophetess Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, delivered Israel. She used to sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the highlands of Ephraim; and the Israelites went to her to have her decide their disputed questions.

She summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kadesh Naphtali and said to him, 'Does not Jehovah the God of Israel command you: "Go, march to Mount Tabor and take with you ten thousand of the Naphtalites and of the Zebulunites? Then I will draw out to you at the brook Kishon Sisera with his chariot corps and his troops, and I will deliver him into your hands."' Barak said to her, 'If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go.' She replied, 'I will certainly go with you, only you will not have the glory in this expedition on which you are going, for Jehovah will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.' So Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kadesh. And Barak called the Zebulunites and the Naphtalites together at Kadesh; and ten thousand men went up with him, and Deborah also accompanied him.

Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, the descendants of Jethro the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak which is near Kadesh.

When it was reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all his people from the heathen city Harosheth to the brook Kishon. Then Deborah said to Barak, 'To the attack! for to-day Jehovah has delivered Sisera into your hands. Has not Jehovah gone out before you?'

So Barak went down from Mount Tabor followed by ten thousand men; and at the onslaught of Barak's swordsmen Jehovah put to flight Sisera and his chariots and all his forces, and Sisera dismounted from his war-chariot and fled on foot. But Barak pursued the chariots and the forces to Harosheth; and all the army of Sisera was destroyed by the sword; not a single man was left.

60. Israel's Battle Hymn of Freedom

On that day Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam, sang this song:

Because of the leadership of Israel's leaders,
And the volunteering of the people, bless Jehovah!

O Jehovah, when thou wentest from Seir,
Marching from the region of Edom,
Earth trembled, the heavens swayed,
The clouds also dripped water;
The hills quaked before Jehovah,
Yon Sinai, before Israel's God.

In the days of Anath's son, Shamgar,
In Jael's days the roads were unused,
And travellers walked through byways.
Leaders disappeared in Israel,
Until you, O Deborah, rose,
Till you rose as a mother in Israel.

My heart is with the commanders of Israel,
Who volunteered among the people.
  Bless Jehovah!
You who ride on tawny asses,
Who sit upon rich saddle-cloths;
You who walk by the way, tell of it,
Far from sounds of dividing the spoil,
In the places where water is drawn,
Let them tell of Jehovah's righteous acts,
And the righteous deeds of his leaders!

Then the people of Jehovah
Went down to the gates, crying:
'Awake, awake, O Deborah,
Awake, awake, sing a battle-song!
Rise up, rise up, O Barak,
Take your captives, O son of Abinoam!'

So they went down against the powerful,
The Lord's people against the mighty.
From Machir commanders went down,
From Zebulun standard-bearers,
Issachar's princes with Deborah,
And with Barak, the men of Naphtali;
Into the valley they streamed after him.

Among the clansmen of Reuben,
Deep was the searching of hearts!
Why did you stay by the sheepfolds,
Hearing the piping for flocks?
Among the clansmen of Reuben,

Deep was the searching of hearts!
Gilead stayed beyond Jordan.
Why lingered Dan by the ships?
Asher sat still by the seashore,
And remained by his landing-places!

Zebulun risked its life,
Naphtali on the heights of the field.
Rulers came, they fought,
The rulers of Canaan fought
At Taanach by the waters of Megiddo.
They took no booty of silver,
For from heaven the very stars fought,
From their courses they fought against Sisera.
The brook Kishon swept them away,
That ancient brook, the brook Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength!
Then did their horse hoofs pound
With the gallop, gallop of steeds.

'Curse Meroz,' said Jehovah's angel,
'Curse bitterly its inhabitants;
For they came not to help Jehovah,
To help him against the mighty.'

Blessed above women shall Jael be,
That wife of Heber the Kenite,
More blessed than all nomad women!
Water he asked, milk she gave,
Curdled milk she brought him
In a bowl well fitted for lords!
She put her hand to the tent-pin,
Her right hand to the workman's hammer.
She struck Sisera, crushing his head,
She shattered, she pierced his temples.
At her feet he sank down and lay still,
At her feet he sank, he fell;
There he sank, a victim slain!

Through the window she peered and cried,
Through the lattice, the mother of Sisera:
'Why so long his chariot in coming?
Why tarry the hoof-beats of steeds?'
Then the wisest of her ladies replied,
She herself also answered her question,
'Are they not dividing the spoil?
A woman or two for each warrior,
For Sisera a spoil of dyed stuffs,
A spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered,
Some pieces of lace for his neck?'

So perish thy foes, O Jehovah!
But may those who love him be as the sun,
Rising up in invincible splendor!

61. The Origin of the First Hebrew State

In course of time the Midianites conquered the Israelites, and to escape them the Israelites made for themselves dens in the mountains and caves and strongholds. When the Israelites had sown their crops, the Midianites would come up and leave nothing for the Israelites to live on, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass; for they came up with their cattle and their tents. The Israelites were so impoverished by the Midianites, that they implored Jehovah's help.

Then the angel of Jehovah came and sat down under the oak which was in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezerite; and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine-press to hide it from the Midianites. The angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said, 'Jehovah is with you, able warrior!' Gideon said to him, 'O my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then has this calamity overtaken us? Where are all his wonderful acts of which our fathers told us, saying, "Did

not Jehovah bring us from Egypt?" But now Jehovah has rejected us and given us into the power of the Midianites.'

Then Jehovah turned to him and said, 'With this strength which you have go and save Israel from the control of the Midianites: do I not send you?' But Gideon said to him, 'O Jehovah, how can I save Israel? See, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the most insignificant man in my clan.' Jehovah said to him, 'I will surely be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as if they were only one man.'

Then Gideon said to him, 'If now I have thy approval, show me a sign that it is thou who art speaking with me. Do not go from here until I bring out to thee my present and lay it before thee.' He said, 'I will wait until you come back.'

So Gideon went in and prepared a kid and cakes made from a measure of flour without yeast. Then he put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot and brought it out to him under the oak and presented it.

The angel of God said to him, 'Take the flesh and the cakes made without yeast and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth.' When he had done so, the angel of Jehovah reached out the end of the staff which was in his hand and touched the flesh and the cakes made without yeast, and fire went up out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the cakes. Then the angel of Jehovah vanished from his sight. When Gideon saw that it was the angel of Jehovah, he cried, 'Alas, O Jehovah, God! For I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face!' But Jehovah said to him, 'You are safe; do not be afraid; you shall not die.' Then Gideon built an altar there to Jehovah and called it 'Jehovah is Well-Disposed.' Even to the present day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezerites.

Then the spirit of Jehovah took possession of Gideon, and he sounded the war trumpet, and the Abiezerites assembled under his leadership. He also sent messengers throughout all the territory of the Manassites, and they assembled under his leadership; and he sent messengers to the Asherites, the Zebulunites, and the Naphtalites, and they went up to join him. But Jehovah said to Gideon, 'You have too many people with you; if I give the Midianites up to the Israelites they will boast, "We have delivered ourselves!" Therefore, proclaim to your people, "Whoever is afraid may go home."'

Then Gideon separated them, so that twenty-two thousand of the people returned, but ten thousand remained. But Jehovah said to him, 'The people are still too many; take them down to the water, and let them separate from you there. Every one of whom I say to you, "This one shall go with you," shall go with you; and every one of whom I say to you, "This one shall not go with you," shall not go.'

So Gideon brought the people down to the water. And Jehovah said to him, 'You shall put by themselves all who lap the water with their tongues, as a dog laps, and all who kneel down on their knees to drink by themselves.' The number of those who lapped with their tongue, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people knelt down on their knees to drink. Then Jehovah said to Gideon, 'By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you and deliver the Midianites into your hands. Let all the rest of the people go home.' So they took the provisions that the people had in their hands, and their trumpets; and Gideon sent home all the Israelites, retaining only the three hundred men.

Then Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed it, and

the three hundred men were with him, faint yet pursuing. And he said to the men of Succoth, 'Give, I beg of you, loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are faint and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.' But the officials of Succoth said, 'Are Zebah and Zalmunna already in your power that we should give bread to your band?' Gideon replied, 'When Jehovah has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my power, for this insult I will thresh your bare flesh with desert thorns and briers.' He went on from there to Penuel and made the same request of the men of Penuel, but they made the same answer as the men of Succoth. To the men of Penuel he also said, 'When I come back victorious, I will break down this tower.'

Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their forces were with them, in all about fifteen thousand men. Gideon went up by the caravan road east of Nobah and Jogbehah and surprised the horde as it was encamped without fear of attack. He divided the three hundred men into three companies and put into the hands of all of them horns and empty earthen jars, with torches in the jars. He also said to them, 'Watch me and do as I do. When I reach the outskirts of the camp and those who are with me blow a blast on the horn, then you also shall blow your horns on every side of the camp and cry, "For Jehovah and Gideon!"'

So Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when guards had just been posted; and they blew the horns and broke in pieces the jars that were in their hands. The three companies also broke their jars, took the torches in their left hands and their swords in their right, and cried, 'The sword of Jehovah

and of Gideon.' And as they stood where they were about the camp, the entire horde awoke, sounded the alarm, and fled. Zebah and Zalmunna also fled; but Gideon pursued and captured the two kings of Midian and threw all the horde into a panic.

When Gideon returned from the battle at the ascent of Heres, he captured a young man who lived at Succoth. At Gideon's request he wrote down for him the names of the officials of Succoth and its leading men, seventy-seven in all. When Gideon came to the men of Succoth, he said, 'See, here are Zebah and Zalmunna about whom you taunted me, saying, "Are Zebah and Zalmunna already in your power that we should give bread to your men who are weary?"' Then he took desert thorns and briers, and with these he threshed the leading men of Succoth. He also broke down the tower of Penuel and put to death the men of the town.

Then Gideon said to Zebah and Zalmunna, 'What kind of men were those whom you killed at Tabor?' They replied, 'They were just like you; each of them looked like a prince.' Gideon said, 'They were my own brothers, the sons of my mother. As surely as Jehovah lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you now.'

Then he said to Jether, his oldest son, 'Up and kill them.' But the boy did not draw his sword, because he was afraid, for he was only a boy. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, 'Get up yourself and fall upon us; for a man has a man's strength!' So Gideon rose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescents that were on their camels' necks.

Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, 'Rule over us, and not only you but your son and your son's son also, for you have saved us from the power of the Midianites.' Gideon said to them, 'I will not rule

over you, nor shall my son rule over you; Jehovah shall rule over you; but let me make one request of you: let every man give me the ear-rings from his spoil' (for they had golden ear-rings, because the conquered were desert dwellers). They answered, 'Certainly, we will give them.' So they spread out a mantle and each man threw into it the ear-rings from his spoil. The weight of the golden ear-rings for which he had asked was nearly seventy pounds of gold, not including the crescents, the pendants, and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian and the chains that were about their camels' necks. Then Gideon made of the gold a priestly robe for use in consulting Jehovah, and placed it in his native city Ophrah.

Gideon had seventy sons, for he had many wives. And his concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son whom he named Abimelech. Gideon died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father in Ophrah of the Abiezerites.

62. Effects of a Rule Founded on Violence

Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal [Gideon] went to Shechem to his mother's relatives and said to them and to all the clan of his mother's family, 'Put this question to the citizens of Shechem, "Is it better for you to have seventy men rule over you, that is, all the sons of Jerubbaal, or to have one man rule over you?" Remember, too, that I am your own flesh and blood.'

So his mother's relatives spoke all these words in his behalf to the men of Shechem; and they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, 'He is our relative.' They also gave him seventy pieces of silver from the temple of Baal-berith with which he hired worthless and reckless fellows, who followed him. He then

went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone; but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal escaped, for he hid himself.

Then all the men of Shechem and Beth-millo assembled by the oak and sacred pillar which are at Shechem, and made Abimelech their ruler. When it was reported to Jotham that the men of Shechem had made Abimelech their ruler, he went and stood on the slope of Mount Gerizim and called to them in a loud voice: 'Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, and may God listen to you! Once upon a time the trees set out to elect a ruler over them. So they said to the olive-tree, "Rule over us." But the olive tree said to them, "Shall I stop yielding my fatness with which gods and men are honored and come to hold sway over the trees?"

'Then the trees said to the fig tree, "You come and rule over us." But the fig tree said to them, "Shall I stop yielding my sweetness and my bountiful crop and come to hold sway over the trees?" The trees then said to the vine, "You come and rule over us." But the vine said to them, "Shall I stop yielding my juice that gladdens gods and men and come to hold sway over trees?"

'Then all the trees said to the bramble, "You come and rule over us." The bramble said to the trees, "If you are electing me as ruler over you in good faith, then come and take refuge in my shadow; but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon!"

'If now you have acted in good faith and justly in making Abimelech ruler, and if you have dealt honorably with Jerubbaal and his family and have done to him as he deserved, in view of the fact that my father

ought for you and at the risk of his life delivered you rom the power of the Midianites, then rejoice in Abimelech, and may he also rejoice in you! But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo, and let fire come out from the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo and devour Abimelech.'

Then Jotham fled and went to Beer and lived there because he feared Abimelech his brother.

When Abimelech had ruled over the Israelites three years, God stirred up dissension between him and the men of Shechem and they were false to him. They set men in ambush against him on the hilltops and robbed all who went by on the road; and it was reported to Abimelech.

Gaal the son of Ebed also came with his clansmen and went to Shechem, and the citizens of Shechem put confidence in him. They went out in the fields and gathered the fruit of their vineyards and pressed the grapes. Then they held a festival and went into the temple of their god and ate and drank and cursed Abimelech. Gaal also said, 'Would that this people were under my authority! I would get rid of Abimelech. I would say to him, "Increase your army and come out."'

Then Gaal went out at the head of the citizens of Shechem and fought with Abimelech. And Abimelech pursued him, as he fled before him, and many fell wounded, even to the entrance of the city gate. Abimelech fought against the city all that day and captured it; and he killed the people who were in it and razed the city and sowed it with salt.

Abimelech later went to Thebez and besieged and captured it. But there was a strong tower in the town to which all the men and women and the inhabi-

tants fled, and they shut themselves in and went up on the roof of the tower. When Abimelech came to the tower, he fought against it and was on the point of setting fire to its door, when a certain woman threw an upper millstone on his head and crushed his skull.

Then he called quickly to the young man who was his armor-bearer and said, 'Draw your sword and kill me, that men may not say of me, "A woman killed him!"' So his attendant ran him through, and he died. When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they all went home. In this way God punished the crime which Abimelech committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers.

63. Jephthah's Fatal Vow

Jephthah the Gileadite was a stalwart warrior, but he was the son of a harlot, and had fled from his relatives and lived in the district of Tob. There certain rascals gathered about him, and they used to go out on raids with him.

After a time the Ammonites made war against the Israelites. Then the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah from the land of Tob, and they said to him, 'Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the Ammonites.' But Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, 'Are you not the men who hated me and drove me out of my father's house? Why then do you come to me now when you are in distress?' But the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, 'This is why we have now turned to you, that you may go with us and fight against the Ammonites, and you shall be our chief, even over all the inhabitants of Gilead.' Then Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, 'If you take me back to fight against the Ammonites and

Jehovah gives me the victory over them, I shall be your chief.' The elders of Gilead replied, 'Jehovah shall be a witness between us; we swear to do as you say.'

Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him chief and commander over them. Jephthah also made this vow to Jehovah: 'If thou wilt deliver the Ammonites completely into my power, then whoever comes out of the door of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be Jehovah's, and I will offer that one as an offering to be consumed with fire.'

So Jephthah went out to fight against the Ammonites; and Jehovah gave him the victory over them, and delivered them into his hands. But when he came home to Mizpah, his daughter was just coming out to meet him with tambourines and choral dances; and she was his only child; beside this one he had neither son nor daughter. So when he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, 'Oh, my daughter, you have stricken me! It is you who are the cause of my woe! for I have made a solemn vow to Jehovah and cannot break it.' She said to him, 'My father, you have made a solemn vow to Jehovah; do to me what you had promised, since Jehovah has taken vengeance for you upon your enemies the Ammonites. But let this favor be granted me: spare me two months that I may go out upon the mountains with those who would have been my bridesmaids and lament because I will never become a wife and mother.' He said, 'Go.'

So he sent her away for two months with her friends, and she lamented on the mountains because she would never become a wife and mother. At the end of two months she returned to her father, who did what he had vowed to do, even though she had never been

married. So it became a custom in Israel: each year the women of Israel go out for four days to bewail the death of the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

64. Samson's Marriage Feast

There was a certain man of Zorah of the clan of the Danites named Manoah; and he and his wife had no children. But the angel of Jehovah appeared to the woman and said to her, 'See, you have no children; but now be careful not to drink any wine or intoxicating drink, and do not eat anything ceremonially unclean; for you are about to become a mother. No razor shall be used upon your son's head, for from birth the boy shall be consecrated to God.' So the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson.

Once Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a Philistine woman. When he came back he said to his father and mother, 'I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah. Get her as a wife for me.' But his father and mother said to him, 'Is there no woman in your own tribe or among all our people, that you must marry a wife from among the heathen Philistines?' But Samson said to his father, 'Get her for me, for she suits me.'

So Samson went with his father and mother to Timnah; and just as they came to the vineyards of Timnah, a full-grown young lion came roaring toward him. The spirit of Jehovah came upon Samson and, although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the beast in two as one tears a kid. But he did not tell his father and mother what he had done.

Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she suited him. When he returned after a while to marry her, he turned aside to see the remains of

the lion, and there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass. He scraped the honey out into his hands and went on, eating it as he went. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they ate; but he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

Then Samson went down to the woman; and he gave a feast there (for so bridegrooms used to do). When the Philistines saw him, they provided thirty comrades to be with him. And Samson said to them, 'Let me now propound to you a riddle. If you can tell me what it is within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty fine linen robes and thirty suits of clothes; but if you cannot tell me, then you shall give me thirty fine linen robes and thirty suits of clothes.' They said to him, 'Propound your riddle, that we may hear it.' And he said to them:

> Out of the eater came something to eat,
> And out of the strong came something sweet.

But for six days they could not solve the riddle.

On the seventh day they said to Samson's wife, 'Wheedle your husband into telling us the riddle, or else we will burn up you and your father's house. Did you invite us here to impoverish us?' So Samson's wife wept before him and said, 'You only hate me and do not love me at all! You have propounded a riddle to my fellow-countrymen and not told me what it is.' He said to her, 'See, I have not told it to my father or my mother, and shall I tell you?' So she wept before him as long as their feast lasted, but on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him harder and harder; and she told the riddle to her fellow countrymen.

So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down, 'What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?' And he said to them:

> If with my heifer you did not plow,
> You had not solved my riddle now.

Then he was suddenly endowed with divine strength, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men and took the spoil from them and gave the suits of clothes to those who had guessed the riddle. But he was very angry and returned to his father's house; and his bride was given to his comrade who had been his best man.

65. Doing to Others as They Do to You

After a while, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife with a kid as a present; but when he said, 'Let me go into the inner apartment to my wife,' her father would not let him go in, but said, 'I thought that you must surely hate her, so I gave her to your best man. Is not her younger sister fairer than she? Take her then, instead.' But Samson said to him, 'This time I shall be justified if I do the Philistines an injury.' So he went and caught three hundred foxes, turned them tail to tail, and put a torch between every pair of tails. When he had set the torches on fire, he let them go into the standing grain of the Philistines and burned up not only the shocks and the standing grain, but the olive orchards as well.

Then the Philistines said, 'Who has done this?' The reply was, 'Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because that man took Samson's wife and gave her to

his best man.' So the Philistines went up, and burnt her and her father. Then Samson said to them, 'If this is the way you do, I will not stop until I have had my revenge on you!' So he fought fiercely and killed many of them; then he went and stayed in a cavern in the cliff of Etam.

When the Philistines went up and camped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi, the Judahites said, 'Why have you come up against us?' They replied, 'We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him what he has done to us.' Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cavern in the cliff of Etam and said to Samson, 'Do you not know that the Philistines are our rulers? What are you doing to us?' He replied, 'I have done to them as they did to me.' They said to him, 'We have come down to bind you, to turn you over to the Philistines.' Samson said to them, 'Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves.' They said to him, 'No; we will simply bind you securely and deliver you to them; but we will not kill you.' So they bound him with two new ropes, and brought him up from the cliff.

When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted when they met him. Then he was suddenly endowed with divine strength, and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that has been burned in the fire, and his bonds melted from his hands. And he found a fresh jawbone of an ass, and having seized it, he killed a thousand men with it. Then Samson said:

> With the jawbone of an ass have I piled them, mass on mass;
> A thousand warriors have I slain with the jawbone of an ass.

66. A Physical Giant and a Moral Weakling

Afterward Samson fell in love with a woman in the valley of Sorek, named Delilah. Then the rulers of the Philistines came to her and said, 'Find out by wheedling him how it is that his strength is so great and how we may overpower and bind him that we may torture him. Then we will each one of us give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.' So Delilah said to Samson, 'Tell me how it is that your strength is so great and how you might be bound to torture you?' Samson said to her, 'If they should bind me with seven green bowstrings which have not been dried, I should become weak like any other man.'

Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven green bowstrings which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. She had the men lying in wait in the inner apartment, but when she said to him, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' he snapped the bowstrings as a string of tow is snapped when it comes near the fire; so the secret of his strength was not discovered.

Then Delilah said to Samson, 'You have deceived me and lied to me; now tell me with what you can be bound fast.' He said to her, 'If they should bind me securely with new ropes with which no work has been done, I should become weak like any other man.' So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' Men were also lying in wait in the inner apartment; but he snapped the ropes from his arms like thread.

Again Delilah said to Samson, 'So far you have deceived me and lied to me; tell me now with what you can be bound fast.' He said to her, 'If you should weave the seven braids on my head along with

the web and beat it into form with the weaving pin, I should become weak like any other man.' So while he was asleep, she took the seven braids of his hair and wove it with the web and beat it into form with the pin, and said to him, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' But he awoke out of his sleep and pulled up the loom and the web.

Then she said to him, 'How can you say, "I love you," when you do not trust me? You have deceived me three times already and have not told me the secret of your great strength.' But in time, since she daily begged and urged him, he was wearied to death, and told her all that he knew, saying, 'A razor has never touched my head; for I have been consecrated to God from my birth. If I should be shaved, my strength would be gone, and I should become weak like any other man.'

When Delilah saw that he had told her all that he knew, she sent and called for the rulers of the Philistines and said, 'Come at once, for he has told me all that he knows.' Then the rulers of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money with them. After she had put Samson to sleep on her knees, she called for a man and had him shave off the seven braids on his head. Then she began to tease him, and his strength went from him; and she said, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' And he awoke out of his sleep and thought, 'I will get up as I have done repeatedly and shake myself free'; for he did not know that Jehovah had left him. So the Philistines seized him and bored out his eyes. Then they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles, and then he was set to grinding in the prison. But the hair of his head began to grow again as soon as he was shaved.

Then the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon and to express their joy, for they said, 'Our god has given Samson our enemy into our power.' When the people saw him, they also praised their god, saying:

Our god has brought low our foe,
He who brought our country woe,
He who slew us with many a blow.

When they were in high spirits, they said, 'Call Samson that he may amuse us.' So they called Samson from the prison and he amused them; and they placed him between the pillars.

Then Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, 'Let me touch the pillars on which the building rests, that I may lean against them.' Now the building was full of men and women, and all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof about three thousand men and women were looking on while Samson amused them. Samson called on Jehovah and said, 'O Jehovah, remember me and strengthen me, I pray thee, just this once, O God, that by one act I may avenge myself on the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes.'

Then Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the building rested, one with his right hand and the other with his left, and leaned against them. And Samson said, 'Let me die with the Philistines.' Then he bent over with all his might, and the house fell upon the rulers and upon all the people who were in it. So those whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed during his lifetime.

Then his brothers and all his family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his *father.*

67. In the Days when Everyone Did as He Pleased

There was a man of the highlands of Ephraim named Micah. He said to his mother, 'The eleven hundred pieces of silver which were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse aloud in my hearing—see, I have the silver; it was I who took it; now I restore it to you.' His mother said, 'Blest of Jehovah is my son!'

So when he gave back the money to his mother, she took two hundred pieces of silver and gave them to the founder, who made with it a carved and molten image. The image was placed in the house of Micah. Micah had a shrine also, and he made a priestly robe for use in consulting Jehovah, and the household gods, and installed one of his sons as priest.

In those days there was no ruler in Israel; every one did as he pleased.

There was a young Levite of Bethlehem in Judah who set out from the town of Bethlehem to find a home wherever he could. As he travelled on, he came to the house of Micah in the highlands of Ephraim. Micah said to him, 'Where do you come from?' He replied, 'I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am travelling to find a home wherever I may.' Micah said to him, 'Stay with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, a complete suit of clothes, and your living.' So the Levite agreed to stay with him and became like one of his own sons. So Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and a member of his household. Then Micah said, 'Now I know that Jehovah will prosper me, for I have a Levite as my priest.'

In those *days the* tribe of the Danites was seeking a

permanent home, so they sent five able men from their various clans to explore; and they said to them, 'Go, explore the land.' So they came to the house of Micah, in the highlands of Ephraim, and passed the night there. When they were near Micah's house they recognized the voice of the young Levite; so they stopped there and said to him, 'Who brought you here and what are you doing in this place, and what is your business here?' He said to them, 'Micah has done so and so for me, and he has hired me to be his priest.' They said to him, 'Ask of God that we may know whether the expedition on which we are going will be successful?' The priest said to them, 'Go and you will succeed; your expedition has God's approval.'

Then the five men went on and reached Laish and found the people there living in security, as do the Sidonians, undisturbed and not suspecting any danger, for there was no one in the land who has authority to restrain them, and they were far from the Sidonians and had nothing to do with any one else.

When the five men came back to their clansmen at Zorah and Eshtaol, they said to them, 'What is your report?' They said, 'Come, let us go up against them; we have seen the land and it is very fertile, and you are here sitting idle! Go without delay and occupy the land.' So six hundred men of the clan of the Danites fully armed set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. They went from there to the highlands of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.

Then the five men who had gone to explore the country of Laish spoke up and said to their clansmen, 'Do you know that in this house there are a priestly robe, used for consulting Jehovah, household gods, and a carved and molten image? Therefore decide what you will do.'

So they stopped and went to Micah's house where the young Levite lived, and gave him a friendly greeting. Meanwhile the six hundred Danites fully armed stood at the entrance of the gate. But the five men who had gone to explore the land went in and took the carved image, the priest's robe, the household gods, and the molten image, while the priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred armed men.

When the five men went into Micah's house and took these things, the priest said to them, 'What are you doing?' They replied, 'Keep still, say nothing; go with us and be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest to one man's household, or to be a priest to a tribe and a clan in Israel?' So the priest was glad, and he took the priest's robe and the household gods and went with them; and they set out, putting the little children, the cattle, and the goods in front of them.

After they had gone some distance from the house of Micah, his neighbors gathered together and overtook the Danites. But when they shouted to the Danites, they turned and said to Micah, 'What is the matter with you, that you are out with such a crowd?' He cried, 'You have taken away my gods which I made and the priest and have gone off, and what is left to me? And now you ask me, "What is the matter with you?"' But the Danites said to him, 'Do not speak with such a loud voice, for fear that some hot-headed fellows might fall upon you, and you lose your life and the lives of your household!' Then the Danites went on their way; and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he went back home.

Thus they took that which Micah had made and the priest whom he had, and came to Laish, to a people

living quietly and not suspecting danger, and slaughtered them and burned the city. There was no one to deliver them, for it was far from Sidon, and they had nothing to do with any one else. It was in the valley which belongs to Beth-rehob. The Danites then rebuilt the city and lived in it and called the city Dan; but its earlier name was Laish.

The Danites set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his descendants were priests to the tribe of the Danites down to the time when the land was stripped of its inhabitants.

RUTH

A HEBREW IDYL

68. Naomi's Fortitude and Ruth's Devotion

Now during the days of the judges, there was once a famine in the land; and a certain man from Bethlehem in Judah took his wife and two sons to live in the territory of Moab. His name was Elimelech and his wife's Naomi, and his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. After they had been living in Moab for some time, Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women named Orpah and Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, Mahlon and Chilion both died, and Naomi was left a childless widow.

So she set out with her daughters-in-law to return from the land of Moab, for she had heard that Jehovah had remembered his people and given them food. As they were setting out on the journey to Judah, Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, 'Go, return each of you to the home of your mother. May Jehovah be kind to you, as you have been kind to the dead and to me. Jehovah grant that each of you may find peace and happiness in the house of a new husband.'

Then she kissed them; but they began to weep aloud and said to her, 'No, we will return with you to your people.' But Naomi said, 'Go back, my daughters; why should you go with me? Can I still bear sons who might become your husbands? Go back, my daughters, go your own way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I should say, "I have hope,"

even if I should have a husband to-night and should bear sons, would you wait for them until they were grown up? Would you remain single for them? No, my daughters! My heart grieves for you, for Jehovah has sent me adversity.' Then they again wept aloud, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth stayed with her.

Naomi said, 'See, your sister-in-law is going back to her own people and to her own gods; go along with her!' But Ruth answered, 'Do not urge me to leave you or to go back, for I will go where you go, and I will stay wherever you stay; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; I will die where you die, and be buried there. May Jehovah bring a curse upon me, if anything but death separate you and me.' When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she ceased urging her to return.

So they journeyed on until they came to Bethlehem. Their arrival stirred the whole town, and the women said, 'Is this Naomi?' But she said to them, 'Do not call me Naomi [Sweetness]: call me Mara [Bitterness], for the Almighty has given me a bitter lot. I had plenty when I left, but Jehovah has brought me back empty-handed. Why should you call me Naomi, now that Jehovah has afflicted me, and the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me?' So Naomi and Ruth returned from Moab; and they reached Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

69. In the Fields of Boaz

Now Naomi was related through her husband to a very wealthy man of the family of Elimelech named Boaz. Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Let me now go into the fields and glean the ears of grain after

him whose favor I should win.' Naomi said to her, 'Go, my daughter.'

So she went to glean in the field after the reapers; and it was her good fortune to glean in that part of the field which belonged to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. When Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, 'Jehovah be with you,' they answered him, 'May Jehovah bless you.' Then Boaz said to his servant who had charge of the reapers, 'Whose maiden is this?' The servant who had charge of the reapers replied, 'It is the Moabite maiden who came back with Naomi from the territory of Moab; and she said, "Let me glean and gather sheaves after the reapers." So she came and has continued to work until now, and she has not rested a moment in the field.'

Then Boaz said to Ruth, 'Listen, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field nor leave this place, but stay here with my maidens. I have told the young men not to trouble you. When you are thirsty, go to the jars and drink of that which the young men have drawn.'

Then she bowed low and said to him, 'Why are you so kind to me, to take interest in me who am a foreigner?' Boaz replied, 'I have heard what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you left your father and mother and your native land to come to a people that you did not know before. May Jehovah repay you for what you have done, and may you be fully rewarded by the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.' Then she said, 'I trust I may please you, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, although I am not really equal to one of your own servants.'

At noonday Boaz said to her, 'Come here and eat some of the food and dip your piece of bread in the wine.' So she sat beside the reapers; and he passed her the roasted grain, and she ate until she was satisfied and had some left. When she rose to glean, Boaz gave this order to his young men: 'Let her glean even among the sheaves and do not disturb her. Also pull out some for her from the bundles and leave for her to glean, and do not find fault with her.'

So she gleaned in the field until evening, then beat out that which she had gleaned; and it was about a bushel of barley. Then she took it up and went into the city and showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her that which she had left from her meal after she had had enough.

Her mother-in-law said to her, 'Where did you glean to-day, and where did you work? A blessing on him who took interest in you!' Then she told her mother-in-law where she had worked, and said, 'The name of the man with whom I worked to-day is Boaz.' Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May the blessing of Jehovah rest upon him who has not ceased to show his loving-kindness to the living and to the dead.' Naomi also said to her, 'The man is a near relation of ours.' Ruth the Moabitess added, 'He said to me, "You must keep near my young men until they have completed all my harvest."' Naomi said to Ruth, 'It is best, my daughter, that you should go out with his maidens and that no one should find you in another field.' So she gleaned with the maidens of Boaz until the end of the barley and wheat harvest; but she lived with her mother-in-law.

70. The Reward of Fortitude and Devotion

Then Naomi said to her, 'My daughter, shall I not seek to secure a home for you where you will be happy and prosperous? Is not Boaz, with whose maidens you have been, a relative of ours? This very night he is going to winnow barley on the threshing-floor. So bathe and anoint yourself and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing-floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. Then when he lies down, you mark the place where he lies. Go in, uncover his feet, lie down, and then he will tell you what to do.' Ruth said to her, 'I will do as you say.'

So she went down to the threshing-floor and did just as her mother-in-law told her. When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in a happy mood, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then Ruth came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and there was a woman lying at his feet. He said, 'Who are you?' She answered, 'I am Ruth your servant; spread therefore your skirt over your servant, for you are a near relative.' He said, 'May you be blest by Jehovah, my daughter; for you have shown me greater favor now than at first, for you have not followed young men, whether poor or rich. My daughter, have no fear; I will do for you all that you ask; for all my townsmen know that you are a virtuous woman. Now it is true that I am a near relative; yet there is one nearer than I. Stay here to-night, and then in the morning, if he will perform for you the duty of a kinsman, well; let him do it. But if he will not perform for you the duty of a kinsman, then as surely as Jehovah lives, I will do it for you. Lie down until morning.'

So she lay at his feet until morning, but rose before any one could recognize her, for Boaz said, 'Let it not be known that a woman came to the threshing-floor.' He also said, 'Bring the cloak which you have on and hold it.' So she held it while he poured into it six measures of barley and laid it on her shoulders. Then he went into the city.

When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi said, 'Is it you, my daughter?' Then Ruth told Naomi all that the man had done for her. She said, 'He gave me these six measures of barley; for he said, "Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed."' Naomi said, 'Wait quietly, my daughter, until you know how the affair will turn out, for the man will not rest unless he settles it all to-day.'

Then Boaz went up to the gate and sat down. Just then the near kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken came along; to him he said, 'Ho, So-and-so (calling him by name), come here and sit down.' So he stopped and sat down. Boaz also took ten of the town elders and said, 'Sit down here.' So they sat down.

Then he said to the near relative, 'Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is offering for sale the piece of land which belonged to our relative Elimelech, and I thought that I would lay the matter before you, suggesting that you buy it in the presence of these men who sit here and of the elders of my people. If you will buy it and so keep it in the possession of the family, do so; but if not, then tell me, that I may know; for no one but you has the right to buy it, and I am next to you.' He said, 'I will buy it.'

Then Boaz said, 'On the day you buy the field from Naomi, you must also marry Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the dead, in order to preserve the name of the dead in connection with his inheritance.' The near

relative said, 'I cannot buy it for myself, lest I should spoil my own inheritance. You take my right of buying it as a relative, for I cannot do so.'

Now this was formerly the custom in Israel: to make valid anything relating to a matter of redemption or exchange, a man drew off his shoe and gave it to the other man; and this was the way contracts were attested in Israel. So when the near relative said to Boaz, 'Buy it for yourself,' Boaz drew off the man's shoe.

Then Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, 'You are witnesses at this time that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's from Naomi. Moreover I have secured Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, to be my wife, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in connection with his inheritance, that his name may not disappear from among his relatives and from the household where he lived. You are witnesses this day.'

Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, 'We are witnesses. May Jehovah make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel so worthily in Ephrata, and make you also famous in Bethlehem. From the children whom Jehovah shall give you by this young woman may your household become like the household of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.'

So Boaz married Ruth, and she became his wife; and Jehovah gave to her a son. Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be Jehovah who has not left you at this time without a near relative, and may his name be famous in Israel. This child will restore your vigor and nourish you in your old age; for your daughter-in-

law who loves you, who is worth more to you than seven sons, has borne a son to Boaz!'

So Naomi took the child in her arms and she became its nurse. Her neighbors also gave it a name, saying, 'A son is born to Naomi!' and they named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

I SAMUEL

THE FOUNDING OF THE HEBREW COMMONWEALTH

71. A Mother's Prayers

Elkanah the son of Jeroham, a Zuphite of the highlands of Ephraim, lived at Ramah with his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

This man used to go up from his village each year to worship and offer a sacrifice to Jehovah of hosts at Shiloh. Now Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests there to Jehovah.

Whenever the day came for Elkanah to offer a sacrifice he gave portions to his wife Peninnah and to all his sons and daughters, but to Hannah he gave only one portion, although he loved her; for Jehovah had given her no children. Her rival made her angry by taunting her because Jehovah had given her no children. Elkanah did this year after year; but whenever Hannah went up to the temple of Jehovah, Peninnah made her so angry that she wept and would not eat. So Elkanah her husband said to her, 'Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat? Why are you so troubled? Am I not more to you than ten sons?'

After they had eaten in Shiloh Hannah arose and stood before Jehovah, while Eli the priest was sitting on his seat beside the door-posts of the temple of Jehovah. With a heavy heart she prayed fervently to Jehovah and wept bitterly. She also made this vow:

O Jehovah of hosts!
If thou wilt regard my affliction,

And remember, not forgetting thy servant,
But wilt give thy servant a son,
Then I will give him to thee,
Throughout all the days of his life;
And no razor shall touch his head.

While she continued praying before Jehovah, Eli watched her mouth. She spoke to herself; her lips moved, but her voice was not heard, so that Eli thought that she was drunk and said to her, 'How long will you act like a drunken woman? Put away your wine and go from the presence of Jehovah.' But Hannah answered, 'No, my lord, I am an unhappy woman; I have not drunk wine nor any intoxicating drink, but I have been pouring out my heart before Jehovah. Do not think that your servant is a wicked woman, for I have gone on speaking until now because my grief and irritation are so great.' Then Eli answered, 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the petition that you have asked of him.' She said, 'May your servant win your approval!' So the woman went away and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

Early in the morning they rose, and after they had worshipped Jehovah, they returned to their home at Ramah. And in the course of the year Hannah bore a son and named him Samuel, saying, 'I asked him of Jehovah.'

Elkanah and all his household again went to offer the yearly sacrifice to Jehovah and to make good his vow, but Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, 'When the child is weaned, then I will take him, and he shall go to Jehovah's temple and he shall live there the rest of his life.' Elkanah said to her, 'Do what seems best to you; wait until you have

weaned him; only may Jehovah help you to do what you have promised.'

So the woman waited and nursed her son until she weaned him. Then she took him with her, and a three-year-old ox, a bushel of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the temple of Jehovah at Shiloh. Then they killed the ox, and Hannah brought the child to Eli and said, 'Oh, my lord, as surely as you live, I am the woman who stood near you here praying earnestly to Jehovah. This is the boy for whom I prayed, and Jehovah has granted what I asked of him. Therefore I have dedicated him to Jehovah; as long as he lives he is dedicated to Jehovah.'

Then Hannah prayed this prayer:

My heart rejoices in Jehovah,
My might is made great by the Lord,
I exult proudly over my enemies,
For I glory in thy salvation.
None is holy like Jehovah,
For there is none other beside thee,
There is no rock like our God.

Speak no more thus proudly,
Let no arrogant words escape you;
For Jehovah is a God who knows,
And by him all actions are weighed.
The bows of the warriors are broken,
Those who stumble are girded with strength.
They who were full toil for bread,
And those who were famished cease laboring;
The barren is the mother of seven,
And she who had many has none.

Jehovah kills, and gives life,
He brings down to the grave, and brings up,
Jehovah makes poor, and makes rich,

He brings men low, and exalts them,
Raising the poor from the dust,
From the dunghill exalting the needy,
To let them sit with princes,
And inherit a glorious throne;
For the pillars of earth are Jehovah's,
He has set the world upon them.

He will guard the steps of his loved ones,
But the wicked shall perish in darkness;
For man shall not triumph by force,
Jehovah's foes shall be shattered,
He will thunder against them in heaven.
He will judge the ends of the earth,
He will give great strength to his king,
And increase the might of his anointed.

72. Samuel's Boyhood Training

Elkanah returned to his home in Ramah, but th boy remained to serve Jehovah under the direction c Eli the priest. So Samuel—a young boy dressed in robe of linen—performed priestly service at the sanc tuary. His mother also made him a little robe an each year brought it to him when she came up wit her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Eli blesse Elkanah and said, 'Jehovah repay you with childre from this woman for the gift which she has given t Jehovah.' Then they returned to their home; an Hannah had three more sons and two daughter Meantime the boy Samuel grew up in the temple o Jehovah.

The sons of Eli were degenerate men; they had n personal knowledge of Jehovah, and they despised th offerings which were brought to him. Eli, moreover was very old, and whenever he heard that his son

were doing wrong he said to them, 'Why do you do such things, for I hear of your evil deeds from all the people. No, my sons: it is not a good report that I hear the people of Jehovah spreading abroad. If a man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against Jehovah, who will act as a mediator for him?' Nevertheless they did not listen to the words of their father.

The boy Samuel grew and was esteemed both by Jehovah and by men; and he continued to serve Jehovah under the direction of Eli; but messages from Jehovah came rarely in those days, and visions were infrequent.

One day Eli was lying in his room. His eyes had begun to grow dim so that he could not see. While the lamp of God was still burning, and Samuel was lying in the temple of Jehovah where the ark of God was, Jehovah called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am.' Then he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, lie down again.' So he went and lay down. Then Jehovah called again, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel rose and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he answered, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.'

Now Samuel had not yet had any personal knowledge of Jehovah nor had a message from Jehovah been revealed to him; so when Jehovah called Samuel again the third time, he rose and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me!' Then Eli realized that Jehovah was calling the boy. So he said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down, and if you are called, say, "Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Then Jehovah came and called as at other times,

'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel answered, 'Speak, for thy servant is listening.' Jehovah said to Samuel, 'See, I am about to do a thing in Israel that will make the ears of every one who hears it tingle. In that day I will do to Eli all that I have predicted against his family from the first to the last. For I have told him that I will condemn his family forever for the crime of which he knew his sons were guilty, for they blasphemed God and he did not restrain them.'

Samuel lay until morning, and then he opened the doors of the temple of Jehovah. He was afraid to tell the vision to Eli; but when Eli called him and said, 'Samuel, my son,' he said, 'Here I am.' And Eli asked, 'What is the thing that Jehovah said to you? Conceal nothing from me; may God do to you whatever he will, if you conceal from me a word of all that he said to you.' So Samuel told him everything, and concealed nothing from him. And Eli said, 'It is Jehovah; let him do what seems good to him.'

73. The Need of a National Deliverer

In those days the Israelites went out to meet the invading Philistines in battle and camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines camped at Aphek. Then the Philistines attacked the Israelites, and in a hard-fought engagement the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines, who killed on the battle-field about four thousand men.

When the people returned to the camp, the leaders of Israel said, 'Why has Jehovah let us be beaten today by the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of our God from Shiloh. He may go out with us and deliver us from our enemies.'

So the people sent to Shiloh and took from there

the ark of Jehovah of hosts. When it came to the camp, all the Israelites raised a great shout, so that the earth resounded.

The Philistines heard the sound of the shouting and said, 'What does this sound of great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?' When they knew that the ark of Jehovah had come to the camp, they were afraid, for they said, 'Their god has come to their camp. Woe to us! for it has never been so before; but be strong and act like men.' So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and each fled to his tent. There was a great slaughter, for thirty thousand of Israel's soldiers were killed.

The same day a Benjamite from the ranks ran to Shiloh with his clothes torn and with earth on his head. As he came, Eli was sitting on his seat by the gate watching the road, for his heart was trembling for the ark of God.

When the man came and told the people of the city, they all cried out. Eli heard the sound of crying and said, 'What is this uproar?' So the man came quickly and told Eli, 'I am the man who came from the battle, for I fled from the ranks.' Eli said, 'How did it go, my son?' The messenger answered, 'Israel fled from the Philistines, and there was also a great slaughter of the people, and your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.' When he spoke of the ark of God, Eli fell off his seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken, for he was old and heavy, and he died.

The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it to the temple of Dagon in Ashdod and set it up by the side of Dagon. When the Ashdodites rose early the next day and came to the temple of Dagon, there was Dagon on the ground prostrate on his face before

the ark of Jehovah. Then they raised up Dagon and set him in his place again. But when they rose early on the following morning, there was Dagon on the ground prostrate on his face before the ark of Jehovah. The head of Dagon and both his hands were broken off on the threshold, and only his trunk was left of him.

Jehovah's punishment fell heavily upon the Ashdodites and the inhabitants of the surrounding territory, and he destroyed them and afflicted them with boils. When the men of Ashdod realized this, they said, 'The ark of the god of Israel shall not remain with us, for his punishment is severe upon us and upon Dagon our god.' So they sent and gathered all the rulers of the Philistines to them, and inquired, 'What shall we do with the ark of the god of Israel?' They answered, 'Let it be carried around to Gath.'

So they carried the ark of the God of Israel around to Gath. Then the hand of Jehovah was against that city—there was a very great panic, and he afflicted the men of the city, both young and old, with boils. Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron; but when it came to Ekron, the Ekronites cried out, 'They have brought around the ark of the god of Israel to kill us and our people!' They sent, therefore, and gathered all the rulers of the Philistines and said, 'Send the ark of the god of Israel back to its own place, so that it will not kill us and our people!'

Then the Philistines called the priests and diviners and inquired, 'What shall we do with the ark of Jehovah? Tell us with what we shall send it to its place.' They said, 'If you are sending away the ark of the god of Israel you must not send it away empty, but must return to him an offering to repay him. Then you shall be healed, and it shall be made known to

you why he has continued to afflict you.' They said, 'What offering shall we send back in order to repay him?' They said, 'Five golden boils and five golden mice, corresponding to the number of the rulers of the Philistines; for one plague was upon you as well as upon your rulers. Now therefore prepare a new cart and two milch cows that have never worn a yoke, and fasten the cows to the cart, but leave their calves behind them at home. Then take the ark of Jehovah and place it upon the cart and put in a box at its side the golden objects which you are returning to them as an offering to repay him. Then send it away. See, if it goes on the way to its own border, to Bethshemesh, then it is Jehovah who has done us this great harm; but if not, then we shall know that it is not he who has afflicted us; it was an accident that befell us.'

The men did so, and the cows took a straight course along the Bethshemesh road. They went along the highway, lowing as they went; and did not turn aside to the right nor to the left. The rulers of the Philistines also went after them to the border of Bethshemesh.

The inhabitants of Bethshemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. When the ark came into the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite, it stood still there. And a great stone was there; so they split up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to Jehovah. When the five rulers of the Philistines saw it, they returned to Ekron that same day.

The men of Bethshemesh sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, 'The Philistines have brought back the ark of Jehovah. Come down and take it back with you.' So the men of Kiriath-

jearim came and carried up the ark of Jehovah, and brought it into the house of Abinidab on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard it.

74. The Perils Inherent in the Centralized Form of Government

When Samuel was old he appointed his sons judges over Israel; but they did not follow his example but went in pursuit of gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

So all the elders of Israel came together to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, 'See, you have grown old and your sons do not follow your example. Now provide us a ruler to govern us like all the nations.'

But it displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a ruler to govern us'; so he prayed to Jehovah, but Jehovah said to him, 'Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for it is not you but me whom they have rejected from being their ruler. Now therefore listen to their one demand; you shall solemnly warn them and shall show them what the ruler who shall reign over them will do.'

So Samuel told all the words of Jehovah to the people who were asking of him a ruler; and he said, 'This is what the ruler who shall reign over you will do: he will take your sons and place them in his own chariots and among his horsemen, and they shall run before his chariots. He will also appoint them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and some to plough his ground and to reap his harvest and to make his implements of war and the furnishings for his chariots. He will take your daughters as perfumers, as cooks, and as bakers. He will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your oliveyards, and

give them to his servants. He will also take a tenth of the products of your grain fields and your vineyards and give to his court attendants and to his servants. He will take your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and your asses and use them for his work. He will take the tenth of the increase of your flocks; and you will become his slaves. Then you will complain on account of the ruler whom you shall have chosen for yourselves; and at that time Jehovah will not answer you.' But the people refused to listen to the advice of Samuel and said, 'No, but a ruler shall be over us that we also may be like all the nations, and he shall govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.' Samuel listened to all the demands of the people and laid them before Jehovah. Then Jehovah said to Samuel, 'Give heed to their demand, and set a ruler over them.'

75. The Selection of Saul as Ruler

There was a citizen of Gibeah of Benjamin named Kish, who was a man of wealth and ability. He had a son named Saul, a man in the prime of life and handsome; no one among the Israelites was more handsome than he; from his shoulders and upward he was taller than any of the people.

Now the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost; so Kish said to Saul, 'Take one of the servants with you and go, seek the asses.' They went through the highlands of Ephraim and the land of Shalishah, but did not find them. Then they crossed into the land of Shaalim, but the asses were not there. They also went through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

They had come into the land of Zuph when Saul

said to his servant who was with him, 'Come, let us return, that my father may not stop thinking of the asses and be anxious about us.' The servant answered him, 'There is a man of God in this town who is held in honor; all that he says surely comes true. Now let us go there; perhaps he can tell us the way we should go.' Saul said to his servant, 'But, suppose we go, what shall we take the man, for the bread is gone from our sacks, and there is no present to take to the man of God? What have we?' The servant answered Saul again and said, 'See I have with me in silver a quarter of a shekel; you shall give it to the man of God that he may tell us our way.' Then Saul said to his servant, 'Your advice is good; come, let us go.' So they went to the town where the man of God was.

As they were going up the ascent to the town, they met young women going out to draw water and said to them, 'Is the seer here?' They answered them, 'He is there; he is before you. Make haste, for he has just come into the town, for the people have a sacrificial feast to-day at the sanctuary on the high place. As soon as you come to the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, for he blesses the sacrifice, and then the guests eat. Therefore go up now, for at this time you will find him.'

So they went up to the town, and when they came inside the gate, Samuel was just coming out toward them to go up to the high place. Now Jehovah had told Samuel the day before Saul came, 'About this time to-morrow I will send you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be a prince over my people Israel. He shall deliver my people from the power of the Philistines; for I have seen the affliction of my people, because their cry has come to *me.*'

When Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah indicated to him, 'This is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall rule over my people.' So when Saul met Samuel in the gate, and said, 'Tell me, if you will, where the seer's house is,' Samuel answered Saul, 'I am the seer; go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me to-day; and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your mind. As for your asses that were lost three days ago, do not trouble yourself about them for they have been found. And to whom belongs all that is desirable in Israel? Does it not belong to you and to your father's house?' Saul answered and said, 'Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?'

But Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and made them sit at the head of the guests (who were about thirty in number). Samuel also said to the cook, 'Bring the portion which I gave you and told you to put aside.' So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and placed them before Saul. Then Samuel said, 'See what has been reserved! Set it before you and eat, for it was kept for you until the appointed time, that you might eat with the people whom I have invited.' So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

After they came down from the high place into the town, they spread a bed for Saul on the roof, and he lay down. Then at daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, 'Rise, that I may send you away.' So Saul rose, and he and Samuel went out into the street. As they were going down through the outskirts of the town, Samuel said to Saul, 'Tell the servant to go on before us, but you stand here that I may tell you the message from God.'

Then Samuel took the flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head, and kissed him and said, 'Has not Jehovah anointed you to be a prince over his people Israel? You shall rule over Jehovah's people and deliver them from the power of their enemies on every side. This is the sign that Jehovah has anointed you to be a prince over his own people: when you go from me today you shall find two men at Rachel's tomb, on the boundary of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, "The asses that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to think about the asses and is anxious about you, saying, 'What shall I do for my son?'" Then you shall go on from there and come to the oak of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three kids, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. They will greet you and give you two loaves of bread which you shall take from their hand. After that you shall come to Gibeah, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. As you come to the city you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a lyre, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them, while they give themselves up to prophetic ecstasy. Then the spirit of Jehovah will come suddenly upon you, and you will share their prophetic ecstasy, and will be transformed into another man. When these signs come to you, do as the occasion offers, for God is with you.' So when Saul turned away from Samuel, God gave him a new heart, and all those signs came to pass that day.

Saul's uncle also said to him and to his servant, 'Where did you go?' He said, 'To seek the asses; and when we saw that they were not to be found, we went to Samuel.' Saul's uncle said, 'Tell me what Samuel

said to you.' Saul replied, 'He told us definitely that the asses were found.' But Saul told him nothing about the rulership of which Samuel spoke.

76. The Election of a Democratic Ruler

After about a month Nahash the Ammonite came up and besieged Jabesh in Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, 'Make terms with us and we will serve you.' But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, 'On this condition will I make terms with you: that I bore out the right eye of each of you, and so bring disgrace upon all Israel.' The elders of Jabesh said to him, 'Give us a seven days' armistice that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there be none to save us, we will come to you.'

So the messengers came to Gibeah where Saul lived and recounted the facts in the hearing of the people, and they all set up a loud wail. Just then Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen, and he said, 'What is the trouble with the people that they are wailing?' Then they told him what the men of Jabesh had said. When he heard it, the spirit of Jehovah came suddenly upon him and his indignation was deeply aroused. He took a pair of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by messengers with the statement, 'Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, the same shall be done to his oxen!'

Then a terror inspired by Jehovah fell upon the people, and they rallied as one man. And Saul said to the messengers who came, 'Say to the men of Jabesh in Gilead, "To-morrow by the time the sun grows hot deliverance shall come to you."'

So the messengers went and told the men of Jabesh,

and they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said to the Ammonites, 'To-morrow we will come out to you, and you shall do to us whatever you please.' So on the following day, Saul divided the people into three divisions; and they went into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and fought against the Ammonites until noon. The Ammonites who remained were so scattered that not two of them were left together.

Then all the people went to Gilgal and there in the presence of Jehovah made Saul ruler, and they offered sacrifices there to establish fellowship with Jehovah; and Saul and all the men of Israel were exceedingly happy.

77. Jonathan's Decisive Victory

Saul selected three thousand men from the Israelites; two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and on the highland of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan his son in Gibeah of Benjamin. But Saul had sent the rest of the people each to his home.

Then Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines in Gibeah; and the Philistines heard of it. But Saul sounded a call to arms throughout all the land, saying, 'Let the Hebrews hear!' So all Israel heard the report that Saul had attacked the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had incurred the hostility of the Philistines.

Then the Philistines were mustered to fight with Israel: three thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and foot soldiers as numerous as the sand of the seashore. They came up and encamped in Michmash, east of Bethaven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a tight place (for the people were hard

pressed), the people hid themselves in caves, in holes, in the rocks, in tombs, and in pits. Also many people crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Then Saul numbered the people who were with him, about six hundred men. And Saul and Jonathan his son, together with the people who were with them, remained in Gibeah of Benjamin, while the Philistines encamped in Michmash. Then the plunderers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three divisions; one division turned in the direction of Ophrah, in the land of Shual, another in the direction of Bethhoron, and another in the direction of the hill that looks down over the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. But the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

Now on that day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, 'Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side.' But he did not tell his father.

Meantime Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is by the threshing-floor, and the people who were with him numbered about six hundred men. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. Along the ravine by which Jonathan attempted to go over to the Philistines' garrison there was a steep rock on the one side, and a steep rock on the other; one was named Bozaz [The Shining], and the other Seneh [The Thorny]. One rock rose up north of Michmash, and the other south of Geba.

So Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, 'Come, let us go over to the garrison of these heathen Philistines; perhaps Jehovah will act for us, for there is nothing that can prevent Jehovah from delivering his people either by many or by few.' His

armor-bearer replied, 'Do whatever you wish, I will heartily support you.' Then Jonathan said, 'See, we will cross over to the men and show ourselves to them. If they say to us, "Stand still until we can reach you," then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up to them. But if they say, "Come up to us," then we will go up; for Jehovah has given them into our power, and this shall be the proof of it.'

When both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, the Philistines said, 'There are Hebrews coming out of the holes where they have hidden.' So the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, 'Come up to us, and we will show you something!' Then Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, 'Come up after me, for Jehovah has given them into the power of Israel.' So Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet and his armor-bearer after him. And the Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and put them to death. In the first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed about twenty men with javelins and rocks from the field. Then there was a great panic in the camp, in the open field, and among all the Philistines. The garrison and even the raiders were panic-stricken, and the earth quaked; so that it produced a God-sent panic.

78. Saul's Rash Vow

The watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked and saw the multitude melting away and rushing here and there. Then Saul said to the people who were with him, 'Look now and see who is gone from us.' When they searched they found that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. So Saul said to

Ahijah, 'Bring the ark of God here,' for at that time it was with the Israelites. While Saul was still speaking to the priest, the tumult in the army of the Philistines kept on increasing. Therefore Saul said to the priest, 'Do not wait to consult the oracle!'

Then Saul and all the people that were with him gathered together and went into battle. And every Philistine's sword was turned upon his fellow, so that there was a very great confusion among them. The Hebrews who were formerly on the side of the Philistines and who had joined their army also went over to the side of the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel who were in hiding in the highlands of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines had fled, closely pursued them in the battle. So Jehovah delivered Israel that day, and the battle passed over beyond Bethhoron. But Saul made a great mistake that day, for he strictly commanded the people, saying, 'Cursed is the man who shall eat any food until evening and until I avenge myself on my enemies.' So none of the people tasted food.

Now there was honey on the surface of the ground; and when the people came to the forest, they saw a stream of honey, but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the curse. But Jonathan had not heard when his father commanded the people; therefore he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and he felt refreshed. Then one of the people spoke up and said, 'Your father strictly commanded the people, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food this day."' But Jonathan replied, 'My father has brought disaster on the land. See how I have been refreshed because I tasted a little

of this honey. If only the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies, the slaughter of the Philistines would have been great.'

Then Saul said, 'Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder until daybreak, and let us not leave one of them.' They said, 'Do whatever you think best.' But the priest said, 'Let us inquire of God.' So Saul asked of God, 'Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them over to Israel?' But he did not answer him that day. Therefore Saul said, 'Come here, all you leaders of the people, and find out who has committed this sin today. For as surely as Jehovah the deliverer of Israel lives, even though it be Jonathan my son, he shall die.' But not one of the people answered him.

Then he said to all Israel, 'You be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other.' The people said to Saul, 'Do what you think best.' Therefore Saul said, 'Jehovah, God of Israel, why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If the sin be mine or that of Jonathan my son, Jehovah, God of Israel, indicate it by the lot marked Urim; but if the sin lies with thy people Israel, indicate it by the lot marked Thummim.' Then Jonathan and Saul were selected and the people were exonerated. So Saul said, 'Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son. He whom Jehovah selects must die.' The people said to Saul, 'It shall not be so!' But Saul overruled the people and they cast the lot between him and Jonathan his son; and Jonathan was selected.

Then Saul said to Jonathan, 'Tell me what you have done.' So Jonathan told him, 'I did indeed taste a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am! I am ready to die.' Saul said, 'God do so to me and more too; Jonathan, you shall

surely die!' But all the people said to Saul, 'Shall Jonathan die who has achieved this great deliverance for Israel? Far from it! As surely as Jehovah lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has wrought with God this day.' So the people saved Jonathan from death. Then Saul refrained from pursuing the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own country.

THE RISE OF DAVID AND THE DECLINE OF SAUL

79. David's Introduction to Public Life

After Saul assumed the rulership over Israel, he fought on every side against all his enemies, against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, Beth-rehob, the king of Zobah, and the Philistines; and whichever way he turned he was victorious. He showed great ability and defeated the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of its plunderers. But the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul. And whenever Saul saw a strong or able man, he would attach him to himself.

Now the spirit of Jehovah had departed from Saul and an evil spirit from Jehovah assailed him. So Saul's servants said to him, 'See now, an evil spirit from Jehovah is assailing you. Let your servants who are here advise you, and let them seek a man skilled in playing the lyre. Then, whenever the evil spirit comes upon you, he shall play on the lyre, and you will be well.' Saul said to his servants, 'Find me a man who plays well, and bring him to me.'

Then one of the young men said, 'I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skilled musician, a strong and able man, a soldier, judicious in speech, of good appearance, and Jehovah is with him.' So Saul sent messengers to Jesse with the command, 'Send me David your son, who is with the flock.' Then Jesse took ten loaves of bread, a skin of wine, and a kid,

and sent them to Saul by his son David. So David came to Saul and entered his service; and Saul loved him and he became his armor-bearer. Saul sent this message to Jesse: 'Let David remain in my service, for I am well pleased with him.' And whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take the lyre and play, and Saul would breathe freely and would be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

80. David's Victory over the Philistine Champion

Now the Philistines mobilized their forces for war, and they gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and camped between Socoh and Ezekah in Ephesdammim. Saul and the men of Israel assembled and camped in the valley of Elah; and they were drawn up in battle array against the Philistines.

The Philistines were standing on the hill on one side, and the Israelites were standing on the hill on the other side with the valley between them. Then there came out from the ranks of the Philistines a champion named Goliath who wore a bronze breast-plate of scales which weighed one hundred and fifty pounds. He also had bronze greaves upon his legs and a bronze back plate between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his iron spear weighed about twenty pounds; and his shield-bearer went before him.

He stood and called to the ranks of Israel: 'Why do you come out to form the line of battle? Am I not a Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I conquer and kill him, then you

shall become our servants and serve us.' The Philistine added, 'I have taunted the ranks of Israel to-day; give me a man that we may fight together.'

When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were greatly terrified. But David said to Saul, 'Let not my lord's courage fail him; I will go and fight this Philistine.' Saul said to David, 'You are not able to go and fight against this Philistine, for you are only a youth and he has been a warrior from his youth.' But David said to Saul, 'Your servant kept his father's sheep, and whenever a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I would go out after him and kill him and rescue it from his mouth. If he attacked me I would seize him by his throat and kill him with a blow. Your servant has killed both lion and bear. Now this heathen Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has taunted the armies of the living God. Jehovah who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.' So Saul said to David, 'Go, and may Jehovah be with you.'

Saul clothed David with his own garments and put a helmet of bronze on his head and gave him a coat of mail. And David fastened on his sword over his coat and made a vain attempt to walk, for he was not accustomed to them. So he said to Saul, 'I cannot go with these, for I am not accustomed to them.' So David took them off.

Then he took his club in his hand, and he chose five smooth stones from the bed of the brook and put them in his bag, and he took his sling in his hand and approached the Philistine. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him, for he was but a fair and ruddy youth. So the Philistine said to David, 'Am I a dog that you come against me with a club?'

And he cursed David by his gods, and said, 'Come to me that I may give your flesh to the birds of the heavens and to the beasts of the field.'

Then David answered the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword and spear and javelin, but I come to you in the name of Jehovah of hosts and of the God of the armies of Israel whom you have insulted this day. Jehovah will deliver you into my hand that I may kill you and cut off your head. And I will give your carcass and the carcasses of the army of the Philistines to the birds of the heavens and to the wild beasts of the earth this day, that all the world may know that Israel has a God, and that all this assembly may know that Jehovah delivers not with the sword and spear; for the battle is Jehovah's and he will give you into our hand.'

When the Philistine started to attack him, David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone, and slung it and struck the Philistine in the forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the earth. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, and drawing his sword from its sheath, he killed him and cut off his head with it.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. The men of Israel and Judah rose up and raised the battle-cry and pursued the Philistines to the entrance to Gath and to the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded of the Philistines fell all the way from the battle-field even to Gath and Ekron.

81. Saul's Jealousy of David

When the Israelites and David returned from slaying the Philistines, the women came out singing and dancing from all the cities of Israel to meet Saul with

tambourines, with cries of rejoicing, and with cymbals. The women sang gaily to each other and said,

Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his tens of thousands.

Saul was very angry, for the incident displeased him, and he said, 'To David they ascribe ten thousands, but to me they ascribe only thousands; what more can he have but the rulership?' So Saul kept his eye on David from that day onward; and he feared David and removed him from being near him and made him commander over a thousand; and he went out and came in at the head of the soldiers. In all that he did David acted wisely and succeeded, and Jehovah was with him. When Saul saw that he acted wisely, he stood in dread of him; but all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in at their head.

Michal, Saul's daughter, also loved David, and when they told Saul, he was pleased, for he said, 'I will give her to him, that she may lead him to destruction and that the Philistines may capture him.' So Saul commanded his servants, 'Say to David privately: "See, the ruler is pleased with you and all his servants love you; now therefore become his son-in-law."' When Saul's servants communicated this message to David, he said, 'Do you think it easy for me to become the son-in-law of a ruler when I am poor and have no reputation?' When Saul's servants told him David's answer, he commanded, 'Say to David: "Saul desires no bride-price but the evidence that you have killed a hundred Philistines."'

So David went with his men and killed a hundred Philistines; and Saul gave him his daughter Michal as

wife. When Saul realized that Jehovah was with David and that all Israel loved him, he feared David still more.

Then Saul commanded Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, was exceedingly fond of David. And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, 'Do not sin against your servant David, for he has not wronged you and his conduct toward you has been excellent; for he risked his life and killed the Philistine, so that Jehovah wrought a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin by shedding innocent blood in killing David without cause?'

So Saul listened to Jonathan's plea and gave his oath: 'As surely as Jehovah lives, he shall not be put to death.'

Then Jonathan called David and told him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul and he was with him as formerly.

But there was war again, and David went out and fought against the Philistines and defeated them so overwhelmingly that they fled before him. Then an evil spirit from Jehovah came upon Saul while he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand and while David was playing on the lyre. Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence so that he drove the spear into the wall; and David fled and so escaped.

That night Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, so as to kill him in the morning. But Michal David's wife told him, 'If you do not save your life to-night, you will be killed to-morrow.' So Michal let David down through the window; and he fled and escaped. Then Michal took the household god and

laid it in the bed, and she put a pillow of goat's hair under its head and covered it with a garment. And when Saul sent messengers to seize David, she said, 'He is sick.'

Again Saul sent the messengers to the house of David with the command, 'Bring him up to me on the bed, that I may put him to death.' When the messengers came in, there was the household god in the bed with the pillow of goat's hair under its head. Saul said to Michal, 'Why have you deceived me thus and let my enemy escape?' Michal answered Saul, 'He said to me: "Let me go; why should I kill you?"'

82. Jonathan's Devotion to David

Then David went and found Jonathan and said, 'What have I done? What is my guilt, and what is my sin in the mind of your father, that he is seeking my life?' Jonathan replied, 'Far be it! You shall not die. You know that my father does nothing great or small that he does not disclose to me, and why should my father hide this from me? He surely will not.' David answered, 'Your father well knows that you are fond of me, and he is saying to himself, "Do not let Jonathan know this that he may not be pained." Nevertheless, as surely as Jehovah lives and as you live, there is but a step between me and death.'

Then Jonathan said to David, 'What do you wish me to do for you?' David answered, 'To-morrow is the festival of the New Moon and I ought to sit at the table with Saul, but let me go and I will hide myself in the field until evening. If your father misses me, then say, "David urgently asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his native town, for the yearly sacrifice is there for all his clan." If he says, "Good,"

then it is well with your servant; but if it arouses his anger, then you will know that he has evil intentions. Now show kindness to your servant, for in the presence of Jehovah you have made a solemn compact with your servant, but if I am at all guilty, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?' Jonathan said, 'That shall never be! If I learn that my father has determined to do you harm, I will tell you.'

Then David said to Jonathan, 'Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?'

Then Jonathan said to David, 'Jehovah the God of Israel be witness that I will sound my father about this time to-morrow. If he is well disposed toward you, then I will send for you and disclose it to you. Should my father be disposed to do you harm, and I fail to disclose it to you and send you away that you may go in peace, God do to Jonathan whatever he will and more too. May Jehovah be with you, as he has been with my father. And if I am yet alive, you shall show me kindness like that of Jehovah himself! But if I should die, you must never cease to show kindness to my family. And if, when Jehovah destroys all the enemies of David from the face of the earth, the family of Jonathan should be destroyed by the family of David, may Jehovah requite the crime by the hand of David's enemies.' So Jonathan renewed his oath to David, because he loved him; for he loved him as much as he loved his own life.

Then Jonathan said to him, 'To-morrow is the festival of the New Moon and you will be missed, for your seat will be empty. On the third day, when you will be greatly missed, go to the place where you hid yourself when you were attacked, and sit down beside the heap of stones. I will shoot three arrows on one

side of it, as though I shot at a mark. Then I will send the boy, saying, "Go, find the arrows." If I call to the boy, "See, the arrows are on this side of you; pick them up!"—then come; for all goes well with you, and as surely as Jehovah lives, there is nothing to fear. But if I call to the boy, "See, the arrows are beyond you," then depart, for Jehovah sends you away. And as for the promise which you and I have made, Jehovah is witness between you and me forever.'

So David hid himself in the field; and when the festival of the New Moon came, Saul sat down to eat the sacrificial meal. He sat on his seat, as usual, by the wall, and Jonathan was opposite, and Abner sat beside Saul; but David's seat was vacant. Saul, however, did not say anything that day, for he thought, 'It is an accident, he is not ceremonially clean, for he has not been cleansed.'

But on the day following the festival of the New Moon, when David's place was again vacant, Saul said to Jonathan, 'Why has not the son of Jesse come to the table, either yesterday or to-day?' Jonathan answered, 'David urgently asked permission to go to Bethlehem, for he said, "Let me go, for we have a family sacrifice in the town, and my brother has commanded me to be there. Now if you approve, let me slip away that I may see my kinsmen." Therefore he has not come to your table.'

Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, 'Son of a rebellious slave girl! Do I not know that you are associated with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to your mother's disgrace? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your rule will be established. Therefore send now and bring him to me, for he is doomed to die.'

Then Jonathan answered Saul his father and said to him, 'Why should he be put to death? What has he done?' But Saul flung his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father had determined to put David to death. Therefore Jonathan rose from the table in hot anger and ate no food on the second day of the month, for he was pained because his father had reviled David.

The next morning Jonathan went out into the field to the place agreed upon with David, and a small boy was with him. He said to his boy, 'Run, find now the arrows which I shoot.' And as the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. When the boy came to the place where the arrow which Jonathan had shot lay, Jonathan called to him, 'Is not the arrow beyond you? Hurry, be quick, do not stop!' So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and brought them to his master. But the boy knew nothing about the matter; only Jonathan and David understood.

83. The Fatal Effects of a Lie

Then David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest who came trembling to meet David and said to him, 'Why are you alone, and no one with you?' David answered Ahimelech the priest, 'Saul has given me orders about some business and has said to me, "Let no one know anything about the business on which I am sending you and about which I have given you orders." I have also directed the young men to meet me at a certain place. Therefore, if you have at hand five loaves of bread, give them to me or whatever can be found.' The priest answered David, 'There is no ordinary bread at hand, but only consecrated bread.' So the priest gave him consecrated bread, for there

was no bread there except the consecrated bread that had been removed from the sanctuary to be replaced at once by hot bread.

Now Doeg, the Edomite, the chief of Saul's herdsmen, was there at the sanctuary that day. And David said to Ahimelech, 'Have you not here at hand a spear or sword? For I did not bring my sword or my weapons with me, since the king's business required haste.' The priest said, 'The sword of Goliath the Philistine whom you slew in the valley of Elah is there, wrapped in a mantle. If you wish to take that, do so, for there is no other except that here.' David answered, 'There is none like that; give it to me.'

Then David went from there and escaped to the stronghold of Adullam. When his brothers and all his father's clan heard of it, they went down there to him. Every one who was in distress and every one who was in debt, and every one who was discontented gathered about him, and he became their leader; and about four hundred men were with him.

When Saul heard that David and the men with him had been discovered, he was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk-tree at the high place, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. Saul said to his servants who stood about him, 'Hear, O Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? Is it not true that all of you have conspired against me, that no one tells me that my son has made a compact with the son of Jesse, and that none of you has pity upon me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to be an enemy against me?' Then Doeg the Edomite, who was standing by the servants of Saul, spoke up and said, 'I saw the son of Jesse go to

Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And the priest inquired of God for him and gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.'

Then Saul summoned Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his clan, including the priests who were in Nob, and all of them came to him. Then Saul said, 'Listen, son of Ahitub!' He answered, 'Here I am, my lord!' Saul said to him, 'Is it not true that you and the son of Jesse have conspired against me and that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, that he might conspire against me?' Ahimelech answered Saul, 'Who among all your servants is like David trusted, your son-in-law, chief over your subjects, and honored in your household? Is this the first time I have inquired of God for him? Far be it from me to be disloyal! Let not the ruler impute any evil intention to his servant nor to any of my clan, for your servant does not know the slightest thing about all this.' But Saul said, 'Ahimelech, you shall surely die, you and all your clan.'

Then Saul said to the runners who were standing about him, 'Turn and kill the priests of Jehovah, for they conspired with David, and although they knew that he was fleeing, they did not tell me.' But Saul's servants would not take the responsibility of killing the priests of Jehovah. Then Saul said to Doeg, 'Turn and kill the priests.' So Doeg the Edomite turned and killed them himself. On that day he killed eighty-five men who wore the priestly garments.

But Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escaped and fled to David. When Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of Jehovah, David said to him, 'I knew that day, because Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I myself am

responsible for the death of all your clan. Remain with me, have no fear, for whoever seeks your life must first take mine, for you are placed in my charge.'

84. David's Magnanimity Toward Saul

Now when David was told, 'The Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors,' he inquired of Jehovah, 'Shall I go and attack these Philistines?' Jehovah said to David, 'Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.' But David's men said to him, 'See, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more will we be if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?' When David again inquired of Jehovah, Jehovah answered him, 'Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hand.' So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and drove away their cattle and killed a great many of them. In this way David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah.

Now when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, he came down with the priestly robe used in consulting Jehovah in his hand. And when it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah, Saul said, 'God has delivered him into my power, for by entering a town that has doors and bars he has let himself be entrapped.'

So Saul summoned all the people to war to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. But when David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, 'Bring the priestly robe here.' Then David said, 'O Jehovah, the God of Israel, thy servant has surely heard that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah, to destroy the town because of me. Will Saul come down, as thy servant has heard? O

Jehovah, God of Israel, tell thy servant.' Jehovah said, 'He will come down.' Then David said, 'Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?' Jehovah said, 'They will surrender you.' Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, left Keilah, and wandered to and fro. When it was reported to Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit. So David lived in the Wilderness of Ziph and remained in the mountain fastnesses.

Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, 'Is not David hiding in the hill country of Hachilah on the eastern side of the Wilderness of Judah?' So Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel to hunt for David. And Saul encamped in the hill country of Hachilah; but David remained in the wilderness. When David saw that Saul was following him into the wilderness, he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had come to the place just in front of him. He then arose and went to the place where Saul had camped, and he saw the place where Saul, with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army, lay; and Saul was lying within the barricade, and the people were camped about him.

Then David turned to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and said, 'Who will go down with me to Saul's camp?' Abishai said, 'I will go with you.' So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and Saul was lying asleep in the barricade, with his spear stuck into the earth at his head and with Abner and the soldiers lying about him.

Then Abishai said to David, 'God has given your enemy to you to-day. Now let me pin him to the earth with his spear at one stroke, for I will not need

to strike him twice!' David replied, 'As surely as Jehovah lives, either Jehovah will smite him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and meet his end. Jehovah forbid that I should lay my hand upon his anointed! But now take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go.' So David took the spear and the jug of water from Saul's head, and they departed. But no man saw it or knew it, for they were all asleep, and no one awoke, for a deep sleep from Jehovah had fallen upon them.

Then David went across and stood on the top of a hill at a distance with a great space between them. And David called to the soldiers and to Abner the son of Ner and said, 'Do you make no answer, Abner?' Abner answered, 'Who are you that calls?' David said to Abner, 'Are you not a man, and who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept guard over your lord, the ruler of Israel? For one of the people came to destroy your lord. You have not done what is right. As surely as Jehovah lives you deserve to die, for you have not kept watch over your master, Jehovah's anointed. Now see where his spear is, and his jug of water that was at his head.'

Saul recognized David's voice and said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' David replied, 'It is my voice, my lord.' And he added, 'Why is it that my lord is pursuing his servant? For what have I done? Or of what am I guilty? Now therefore let my lord listen to me. If Jehovah has stirred you up against me, let him be placated by an offering; but if men have, let them be accursed before Jehovah, for they have driven me out to-day, saying, "Go serve other gods," so that I have no share in the land which Jehovah has given to his people. May I not meet my end far away from the presence of Jehovah, for the ruler of Israel

has come out to seek my life, as one hunts a partridge on the mountains.'

Then Saul said, 'I have done wrong. Come back, my son David, for I will do you no more harm, for you have regarded my life as sacred in your eyes to-day. I have acted foolishly and have made a great mistake.' David answered, 'Here is Saul's spear! Let one of the young men come over and take it. May Jehovah reward each one's uprightness and fidelity; for Jehovah delivered you to me to-day, but I would not raise my hand against Jehovah's anointed. And as I to-day valued your life highly, so may Jehovah value my life highly and deliver me from all adversity.'

Then Saul said to David, 'May you be blessed, my son David! You shall do great deeds and shall surely succeed!' So David went his way, but Saul returned home.

85. Abigail's Wise Counsel

Then David went away into the Wilderness of Maon. Now there was a man in Maon, whose property was in Carmel. The man was very rich, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats, and he was engaged in shearing his sheep at Carmel. His name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. The woman was sensible and beautiful, but the man was rough and ill-mannered; and he was a Calebite.

When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent ten young men with the command, 'Go up to Carmel and enter Nabal's house and greet him in my name; and you shall say to him and to his clan, "Peace and prosperity be to you and your household and to all that you have. Now I have heard that you have sheep-shearers. Your shepherds

were with us, and we did not insult them, and nothing of theirs was missing all the while they were in Carmel. Ask your young men and they will tell you. Therefore give my young men a favorable reception, for we have come on a feast day. Give also whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David."'

When David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal for David as directed, and then waited. But Nabal answered David's servants, 'Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? Many are the slaves these days who break away from their masters! Should I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have prepared for my shearers and give it to men of whom I know nothing?' So when David's young men returned and reported to him, he said to them, 'Let every man put on his sword.' So they all put on their swords. David also put on his sword; and about four hundred men followed David, and two hundred remained with the baggage.

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, 'David has just sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he insulted them. The men have been very good to us and we have not been insulted nor have we missed anything, as long as we were with them in the open country. They were as a wall about us both night and day all the time we were near them guarding the sheep. Now therefore decide what you will do, for evil is determined against our master and against all his house, for he is such an ill-tempered churl that no one can reason with him.'

Then Abigail quickly took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five roasted sheep, five baskets of parched grain, a hundred bunches of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on asses. She said to her young men, 'Go on ahead of

me; see, I am coming after you.' But she said nothing about it to her husband Nabal. As she was riding on the ass and coming down under cover of a hill, David and his men were coming down toward her, so that she met them. David had just said, 'It was in vain that I guarded all that belongs to this fellow in the wilderness, so that nothing of his was missing, for he has returned me evil for good. May God bring a similar judgment upon David and more too, if by daybreak I leave a single man of all those who belong to him.'

When Abigail saw David, she dismounted hastily from her ass and bowed before him with her face to the ground. As she fell at his feet she said, 'Upon me, my lord, upon me be the guilt. Let your servant speak in your ears, and heed her words. Let not my lord pay any attention to that worthless Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. "Reckless Fool" is his name and reckless folly rules him. But your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. Now my lord, as surely as Jehovah lives and as you live, since Jehovah has kept you from committing an act of bloodshed and from avenging yourself by your own hand, may your enemies and those who seek to harm my lord become like Nabal. Let this present which your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow him. I beg you, forgive the wrong done by your servant, for Jehovah will certainly establish for my lord a stable house, for my lord is fighting the wars of Jehovah, and you shall not be found guilty of any evil deed as long as you live. Should a man rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be carefully preserved by Jehovah your God, but he will cast away the lives of your enemies as with a sling. When Jehovah

has done for you all the good that he has promised and has made you prince over Israel, then you will not have this as a qualm or a burden on your conscience that you needlessly shed blood or that you secured redress for yourself by your own hand. When Jehovah gives prosperity to my lord, then too remember your servant.'

David said to Abigail, 'Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discretion, and a blessing on you, who have kept me this day from committing an act of bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand. For as surely as Jehovah the God of Israel lives, who has kept me from doing you harm, unless you had quickly come to meet me, truly by daybreak not one man would have been left to Nabal.' So David received from her all which she had brought him; and he said to her, 'Go back in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your advice and granted your request.'

When Abigail returned to Nabal, he was holding a feast in his house like that of a king. He was in a hilarious state, for he was very drunk; so she told him nothing whatever until daybreak. But in the morning, when the effects of the wine had worn off from Nabal, his wife told him what she had done; and his heart was paralyzed and he became insensible. About ten days later he had a stroke from which he died.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, 'Thanks be to Jehovah who has avenged Nabal's insult to me and has kept me from doing wrong, for Jehovah has visited Nabal's crime upon his own head.'

Then David sent to ask Abigail to become his wife. When his servants came to her at Carmel and said, 'David has sent us to you to take you to him to be his wife,' she rose and bowed her face to the earth and said, 'See, your slave is willing to be a servant to wash

the feet of my lord's servants.' Then Abigail quickly rose and mounted an ass, and five of her maids followed as servants. So she accompanied the messengers of David, and became his wife.

86. David Among the Philistines

Then David said to himself, 'I shall meet my end some day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair and no longer search for me within the borders of Israel; thus I will escape from him.' David therefore went over, together with the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. And David lived together with his men, with Achish at Gath, each with his household, David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. When Saul was informed that David had fled to Gath, he gave up seeking for him.

David said to Achish, 'If now you will grant me the favor, give me a place in one of the towns in the open country, that I may live there; for why should your servant live in the royal city with you?' So Achish gave him Ziklag; therefore to this day Ziklag belongs to the rulers of Judah. The length of the time that David lived in the open country of the Philistines was a year and four months.

And David and his men went up and made a raid upon the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for these tribes inhabit the land which extends from Telem in the direction of Shur to the land of Egypt. Whenever David raided the land, he did not leave alive man or woman, but taking the sheep, the oxen, the asses, the camels, and the clothing, he returned and went to Achish. Then when Achish said, 'Where

have you made a raid to-day?' David answered, 'Against the South Country of Judah, or against the South Country of the Jerahmeelites, or against the South Country of the Kenites.' And Achish trusted David, thinking, 'He has made his people Israel detest him; therefore he will be my subject forever.'

Now in those days the Philistines assembled their forces to make war against Israel. And Achish said to David, 'You may be assured that you and your men shall go with me in the army.' David replied, 'You shall then know what your servant can do.' Achish said to David, 'In that case I will make you the permanent captain of my body guard.'

Then the Philistines assembled all their forces at Aphek, and the Israelites camped at the fountain in Jezreel. When the rulers of the Philistines were marching past, by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were marching in the rear with Achish, the commanders of the Philistines said, 'What are those Hebrews doing here?' Achish said to them, 'Is this not David, the servant of Saul the ruler of Israel, who has been with me these two years, and I have found no fault in him from the time that he came to me to the present?'

But the commanders of the Philistines were displeased and said to him, 'Send the man back to the place where you had stationed him. Do not let him go down with us into battle, lest we have a foe in the camp; for how could this fellow better ingratiate himself with his master than with the heads of these men? Is not this the David of whom they sang to one another in the dances:

Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands?

Then Achish called David and said to him, 'As surely as Jehovah lives, you are upright, and your conduct toward me both in and out of the camp has been satisfactory, for I have found nothing wrong in you from the time that you came to me to the present; but you are not approved by the rulers. Go back, therefore, in peace, that you may do nothing to displease the rulers of the Philistines.' David said to Achish, 'But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day that I entered your service, that I may not go out and fight the enemies of my lord the king?' Achish answered, 'I know that you are as faithful to me as an angel of God, but the commanders of the Philistines have said, "He shall not go with us into battle." Therefore you and those who came with you are to rise early in the morning, and go to the place where I have stationed you. And do not entertain any evil design in your heart, for I regard you as perfectly reliable; but rise early in the morning and, as soon as it is light, depart.'

So David and his men arose early in the morning to return to the Philistine land, but the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

On the third day, when David and his men returned to Ziklag, the Amalekites had made a raid on the South Country and on Ziklag, and had attacked Ziklag and burnt it with fire, and had also carried away captive all who were in it, including women and children. They had not killed any but had carried them away with them. Then David and the people who were with him wept aloud until they were no longer able to weep.

David was in great anxiety, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was embittered for their sons and daughters; but David

took courage, relying on Jehovah his God. So David with his six hundred followers went on to the Brook Besor, where those who were too exhausted to cross the brook remained.

They found there an Egyptian in the open field and brought him to David and gave him food to eat and water to drink. Then David said to him, 'To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?' He replied, 'I am an Egyptian lad, an Amalekite's servant, and my master abandoned me, because I fell sick three days ago. We made a raid upon the South Country of the Cherethites and upon that which belongs to Judah and upon the South Country of Caleb, and Ziklag we destroyed by fire.' David then said to him, 'Will you guide me to this robber band?' He replied, 'Swear to me by your God, that you will neither kill me nor turn me over to my master, and I will guide you to this band.'

When he had brought him down, the Amalekites were scattered over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. David fought against them from twilight to the evening of the next day, and only four hundred young men who were mounted on camels escaped.

So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away and rescued his two wives; nothing at all was missing. Then he took all the flocks and the herds and drove those animals before the people, and they said, 'This is David's spoil.'

When David came to the two hundred men who had been so faint that they could not follow him, all the wicked, worthless fellows who went with him said, 'Inasmuch as these did not go with us, let us not give

them any of the spoil that we have recaptured, except that each man may take his wife and children and depart.' David answered, 'My brothers, you shall not do so with that which Jehovah has given us, after he has preserved our lives and delivered this marauding band that attacked us into our power. Those who remain with the baggage shall have an equal share with those who fight.' So from that day to the present he made this a statute and a custom in Israel.

When David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the leaders of Judah and to his relatives, saying, 'See! a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of Jehovah.'

87. Saul's Visit to the Medium of Endor

Samuel had died and all Israel had mourned for him and had buried him in his native town Ramah. Saul, too, had put the mediums and those who had intercourse with the spirits of the dead out of the land.

Then the Philistines came and camped in Shunem, and Saul assembled all Israel and camped in Gilboa; but when he saw the army of the Philistines, he was terrified and filled with apprehension. So he inquired of Jehovah, but Jehovah did not answer him either by dream or by lot or by the prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, 'Find for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go and inquire through her.' His servants said to him, 'There is such a woman at Endor.'

So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes and went, taking two men with him; and they came to the woman at night. And he said, 'Inquire for me through some departed spirit and bring up for me the one for whom I shall ask.' The woman said to him,

'You know what Saul has done, how he has banished from the land the mediums and those who have intercourse with the spirits of the departed. Why then are you laying a snare for my life, to cause my death?' But Saul swore to her by Jehovah saying, 'As surely as Jehovah lives, you will incur no guilt through this act.' Then the woman said, 'Whom shall I bring up to you?' Saul said, 'Bring up Samuel.'

When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out and said to Saul, 'Why have you deceived me, for you are Saul?' Saul replied, 'Do not be afraid! What do you see?' The woman said to Saul, 'I see a god coming out of the earth.' Saul asked, 'What is his appearance?' She said, 'An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a mantle.' Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage to him.

Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?' Saul answered, 'I am in great difficulty, for the Philistines are making war against me, and God has turned from me and answers me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; so I have called you to tell me what I shall do.' Samuel said, 'Why do you ask of me when Jehovah has turned from you and become your enemy? He has wrested the authority from your hand and given it to another, even to David. To-morrow you, with your sons beside you, shall fall and Jehovah will deliver the army of Israel into the power of the Philistines.'

Saul was overcome and fell at full length upon the earth, for the words of Samuel filled him with dread, so he had no strength left, for he had not eaten any food all that day and night. When the woman came to Saul and saw that he was in great distress, she said to him, 'See, your servant has obeyed your request.

I have taken my life in my hand and have done what you asked me. Now therefore, listen also to my advice and let me set before you a little food, and eat that you may have strength to go on with your journey.' Saul refused and said, 'I will not eat'; but his servants, as well as the woman, urged him, until he listened to their advice. Then he rose from the earth and sat upon the couch. And the woman had a fat calf in the house which she quickly killed, and she took flour and kneaded it and baked from it bread without yeast. She set it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose up and went away that night.

88. The Defeat and Death of a Brave Warrior

The Philistines fought against Israel, but the Israelites fled from them and fell mortally wounded on Mount Gilboa. Then the Philistines closely pursued Saul and his sons; and they killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. So the battle went against Saul, and when the archers got him in range, he was severely wounded. Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, 'Draw your sword and run me through with it, so that these heathen Philistines may not come and make cruel sport of me.' But his armor-bearer refused, because he was very much afraid. Saul therefore took his own sword and fell upon it. When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him. So Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer died on the same day.

When the Israelites who were in the cities of the lowland and across the Jordan saw that the Israelites had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled, and the Philistines came and occupied them.

On the following day the Philistines came to strip the slain, and found that Saul and his three sons had fallen on Mount Gilboa. They cut off his head and stripped off his armor and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to bring the good news to their idols and to the people. And they put his armor in the temple of Ashtarte and fastened his body on the wall of Bethshan.

When the inhabitants of Jabesh in Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, their brave men rose up and marched all night and took the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Bethshan and brought them to Jabesh and lamented over them there. Then they took their bones and buried them under the oak tree in Jabesh and fasted seven days.

II SAMUEL

DAVID'S LEADERSHIP OF THE HEBREWS

89. David's Lament Over Saul and Jonathan

On the third day after David returned to Ziklag after defeating the Amalekites a man came from the camp of Saul with his clothes torn and with earth upon his head. When he came to David, he fell on the ground and paid homage. And David said to him, 'Where do you come from?' He answered, 'I have escaped from the camp of Israel.' David said to him, 'How did the battle go? Tell me.' He answered, 'The people fled from the battle-field, and many of them fell, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead!'

Then David and all the men who were with him tore their clothes and mourned and wept and fasted until evening, because Saul and Jonathan his son and the people of Jehovah had fallen by the sword.

David then sang this dirge over Saul and Jonathan:

Weep, O Judah!
Grieve, O Israel!
On your heights are the slain!
How the mighty have fallen!

Tell it not in Gath,
Nor in the streets of Askelon:
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

O heights of Gilboa, may no dew descend,
Nor rain upon you, O fields of death!
For there was the shield of the mighty thrown down,
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
The sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were never parted;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you daintily in fine linen,
Who put ornaments of gold on your garments.
How the mighty have fallen in the midst of battle!

O Jonathan, your death has mortally wounded me,
O Jonathan, my brother, for you I am distressed.
You were ever a friend to me most dear,
Your love meant far more than the love of women!

How the mighty have fallen,
And the weapons of war vanished!

90. David's Call to Leadership

After this David inquired of Jehovah, saying, 'Shall I go up into one of the cities of Judah?' Jehovah answered, 'Go up.' When David asked, 'To which shall I go?' he said, 'To Hebron.' So David went up with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David brought the men who were with him, each with his family, and they lived in the towns about Hebron. And the men of Judah came there and anointed David as ruler over the clans of Judah.

When they told David about the men of Jabesh in Gilead who had buried Saul, David sent messengers to

them and said, 'May you be blessed by Jehovah because you have shown this kindness to your master Saul and have buried him. Even so may Jehovah show kindness and fidelity to you; and I also will repay you for this kind deed which you have done. Therefore be brave and valiant; for Saul your master is dead, and the clans of Judah have anointed me to rule over them.'

Now Abner the son of Ner, the commander of Saul's army, had taken Ishbaal the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim and made him ruler over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and all Israel. But the clans of Judah remained loyal to David.

There was continual warfare between the adherents of Saul and those of David; but David kept growing stronger while the adherents of Saul grew weaker. Then the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went about midday to the palace of Ishbaal, as he was taking his rest at noon. The doorkeeper of the palace was cleaning wheat, but he grew drowsy and slept. So Rechab and Baanah his brother slipped in and, attacking Ishbaal, they killed him and cut off his head.

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'See, we are your kinsmen. In times past when Saul was ruler over us, it was you who led the Israelites, and Jehovah has said to you, "You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall become the leader of Israel."' So all the elders of Israel came to David, and he made an agreement with them in Hebron in the presence of Jehovah, and they anointed David ruler over Israel.

David was thirty years old when he began to rule and he ruled forty years. In Hebron he ruled over

Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he ruled thirty-three years over both Israel and Judah.

91. The Struggle for Independence

When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David ruler over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David; but when he heard of this he went down to the fortress.

Three of David's thirty warriors went down to him to the top of the rock, to the fortress of Adullam, while a force of the Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. David was at that time in the fortress, and a garrison of the Philistines was in Bethlehem, and David longed and said, 'O that some one would bring me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!' Then the three mighty warriors broke through the line of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate and brought it to David. He would not drink of it, however, but poured it out as an offering to Jehovah and said, 'Jehovah forbid that I should do it. This is the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives.' Therefore he would not drink it. These deeds were done by the three mighty warriors.

When the Philistines came and overran the Valley of Rephaim, David inquired of Jehovah: 'Shall I go out against the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into my hand?' Jehovah said to David, 'Go; for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into your hand.' So David went to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, 'Jehovah has broken down my enemies before me, like the breaking through of waters.'

Then the Philistines came up again and overran the

Valley of Rephaim. When David inquired of Jehovah, he said, 'You shall not make a direct attack. Go around on their rear and attack them opposite the balsam trees. When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsams, act quickly, for then Jehovah will have gone out before you to attack the army of the Philistines.' David did as Jehovah commanded him and routed the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezér.

And David and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land who had said to David, 'You shall not come in here, for the blind and the lame will turn you back,' for they thought, 'David cannot come in here.'

Nevertheless David took the fortress of Zion, and lived in the fortress, and called it the City of David; and he built a wall around it from Millo inwards.

David continued to grow more powerful, for Jehovah of hosts was with him. And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to him and cedar trees and carpenters and masons and they built a palace for him. So David knew that Jehovah had established him as ruler over Israel, and that he had made his realm powerful for the sake of his people Israel.

92. Jerusalem Made the Holy City

David again assembled all the picked men of Israel, thirty thousand in all, and went with all the people who accompanied him to Baal-Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which bears the name of Jehovah of hosts who sits enthroned upon the cherubim. They placed the ark of God upon a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab on the hill, with Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, guid-

ing the cart. Uzzah went with the ark of God, while Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the people of Israel danced before Jehovah with all their might to the music of harps and lyres and drums and castanets and cymbals.

When they came to the threshing-floor of Nachon, Uzzah stretched out his hand to support the ark of God, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of Jehovah was aroused against Uzzah and he struck him down there, because he had stretched out his hand to the ark, so he died there in the presence of God. David was afraid of Jehovah that day, and said, 'How can the ark of Jehovah come to me?' So David was not willing to remove the ark of Jehovah to the City of David, but carried it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, and it remained there three months. And Jehovah blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

When the report came to David, 'Jehovah has blessed Obed-edom and all his household because of the ark of God,' David joyfully brought up the ark from the house of Obed-edom to the City of David. Whenever the bearers of the ark of Jehovah advanced six paces, David sacrificed an ox and a fatling; and he danced before Jehovah with all his might and had about his waist a priestly garment made of linen. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting and the blare of trumpets.

When they had brought in the ark of Jehovah and had set it in its place in the tent that David had erected for it, he offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices to Jehovah. When David had finished offering these sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name of Jehovah of hosts and distributed to the whole assembled multitude of the Israelites, both men and women, a roll

of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people departed to their homes.

This message also from Jehovah came to Nathan the prophet: 'You shall say to my servant David: "Jehovah of hosts declares, I took you from the pasture from following the sheep to be chief over my people Israel, and I have been with you wherever you went, to destroy all your enemies before you, and I will make you a name, like that of the great in the earth. When your life is ended and you are buried with your fathers, I will raise up your son after you, and I will establish his rule. I will be a father to him, and he shall be my son. When he goes astray I will correct him with the discipline, and with the punishment that men inflict. I will not withdraw my favor from him as I withdrew it from him who preceded you. Your house and your dominion shall always stand firm before me; your authority shall be established forever."'

93. David's Treatment of Jonathan's Son

Then David asked, 'Is any one left of the family of Saul to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake?' And there was a servant of Saul named Ziba. When they summoned him before David, he said to him, 'Are you Ziba?' He replied, 'Your servant.' David said, 'Is there any one else belonging to the family of Saul to whom I may show kindness like that of God?' Ziba answered, 'A son of Jonathan is still living, but he is lame in his feet.' David inquired, 'Where is he?' Ziba replied, 'He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lodebar.'

Then David sent and brought him from the house of Machir; and when Meribaal the son of Jonathan

came to David, he bowed to the ground and did obeisance. David said, 'Meribaal!' He answered, 'Behold your servant!' And David said to him, 'Fear not, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table continually.' Meribaal bowed down and said, 'What is your servant that you should look favorably upon one as unworthy as I?'

Then David called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, 'I have given to your master's son all that belongs to Saul and to his family. You with your sons and servants shall cultivate the land for him and harvest the fruits, that your master's son may have food to eat; but Meribaal your master's son shall always eat at my table.' Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants; and he said to David, 'Your servant will do all that my lord commands.'

So Meribaal ate at David's table like one of his own sons. Meribaal also had a young son, whose name was Mica; and all who lived in the house of Ziba were Meribaal's servants. So Meribaal lived in Jerusalem, and though he was lame in both feet, he always ate at David's table.

94. David's Foreign Conquests

David conquered the Moabites and measured them off with a line, making them lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines; one full line to put to death and one full line to save alive. So the Moabites became subject to David and paid tribute. He also put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David.

After this the king of the Ammonites died and

Hanun his son succeeded him. So David said, 'I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash as his father showed kindness to me.' Therefore David sent his servants to condole with him concerning his father. But when David's servants came to the land of the Ammonites, the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, 'Do you think that David is honoring your father by sending bearers of condolence to you? Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?'

So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half of their beards, cut their robes in two down to their hips, and sent them away. When David was told about the men, he sent messengers to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And David said, 'Stay at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return.'

Now when the Ammonites saw that they had brought themselves into bad repute with David, they hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and of Zobah, with twenty thousand infantry, and the king of Maacah and of Ishtob with twelve thousand men. When David heard of it, he sent Joab with all the army of trained warriors. The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, but the Arameans were by themselves in the open country.

When Joab saw that he was being attacked both in the front and in the rear, he selected the picked men of Israel and placed them opposite the Arameans. The main body of the army he put under the command of Abishai his brother and placed them opposite the Ammonites. Then he said, 'If the Arameans should be too strong for me, you come and help me, but if the Ammonites should be too strong for you, then I will go and help you. Be brave, and let us show our

strength for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may Jehovah do what seems best to him.'

When Joab and the people who were with him advanced against the Arameans, they fled before him. When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, they also fled before Abishai and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.

A year later, at the time when kings are accustomed to make war, David sent Joab and his army with him, and they defeated the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and took the section of the city where the springs were. Then Joab sent messengers to David to report: 'I have fought against Rabbah and have taken the section of the city where the springs are. Now therefore you call the rest of the people together and besiege the city and capture it, for fear that if I take the city it would be called my victory.'

So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah and fought against it and captured it. He also took from the head of the Ammonite god Milcom a golden crown which weighed as much as a gold talent; and it was inset with a precious stone which was placed on David's head. He also carried away the great amount of spoil that was in the city, and took its inhabitants away as captives.

95. David's Double Crime

One evening, while Joab was besieging Rabbath Ammon, David arose from his bed and walked upon the roof of the royal palace. From the roof he saw a

woman bathing; and she was very beautiful. And David sent to inquire about the woman; and some one said, 'Is not this Bathsheba the daughter of Elia and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?' Then David sent messengers to bring her; and she came to him, and he satisfied his passion. Then she returned to her house, but when the woman knew that she was to become a mother, she sent and told David.

Then David sent this message to Joab: 'Send me Uriah the Hittite.' So Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him about the welfare of Joab and the people and the progress of the war. Then David said to Uriah, 'Go down to your house and wash your feet.' So Uriah left the palace, and David sent after him a supply of food. But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

When David was told, 'Uriah did not go down to his house,' he said to Uriah, 'Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?' But Uriah said to David, 'The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in huts, and my master Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open field; shall I then go to my house to eat and drink and to remain with my wife! As surely as Jehovah lives and you live, I cannot do this.' Then David said to Uriah, 'Stay here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let you go.' So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. But on the next day David invited him and he ate and drank in his presence, so that he made him drunk. Then in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but did not go down to his house.

In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, 'Place

Uriah in the front line where there is the fiercest fighting, then retreat from behind him, that he may be struck down and die.' So Joab, in posting guards over the city, assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were brave men. And the men of the city made a sortie and fought against Joab, and some of the soldiers of David fell, and Uriah the Hittite was killed.

Then Joab sent to tell David all the facts concerning the war, and he gave this charge to the messenger: 'If, after you have finished telling the ruler all the facts about the war, his wrath is aroused and he says to you, "Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck down Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone upon him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go near the wall?" then say, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."'

So the messenger of Joab went to Jerusalem and told David all that Joab commanded him. Then David said to the messenger, 'Say to Joab, "Let not this thing distress you, for the sword takes one and then another; continue your attack upon the city and capture it," and encourage him.'

When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made the usual lamentation for him. But when the mourning was over, David sent and took her into his palace, and she became his wife and bore him a son.

96. Nathan's Condemnation of David's Crimes

What David had done displeased Jehovah, and he sent the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan went to him and said, 'There were two men in one city, the

one rich and the other poor. The rich man had many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb which he had bought. He fed it and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his own scanty supply of food and drink out of his own cup and lay in his bosom and was like a daughter to him. Now a traveller came to the rich man; and he spared his own flock and did not take from it nor from his own herd to make preparations for the traveller who had come to him, but took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the guest who had come.'

Then David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, 'As surely as Jehovah lives, the man who has done this is worthy of death, and he shall restore seven times the value of the lamb, because he showed no pity.'

Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! Jehovah the God of Israel declares: "I anointed you ruler over Israel and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul, and I gave you your master's house and your master's wives to be your own, and I gave you the nations of Israel and Judah, and if that were too little, I would add as much again. Why have you despised Jehovah by doing that which is wrong in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."'

Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against Jehovah!' And Nathan said to David, 'Jehovah has also averted the consequences of your sin so that you shall not die. Yet, because by this deed you have

scorned Jehovah, the child that is born to you shall surely die.' Then Nathan went to his house.

And Jehovah afflicted the child which Uriah's wife bore to David, so that it fell sick. Then David entreated God for the child, and fasted strictly and went in and lay all night in sackcloth upon the earth. And the elders of his house stood over him to raise him up from the earth; but he would not rise nor eat with them. When on the seventh day the child died, the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, 'While the child was yet alive, we spoke to him and he paid no heed to our voice; how can we tell him that the child is dead, for he will do some harm!'

But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, he perceived that the child was dead, and said to his servants, 'Is the child dead?' They replied, 'He is dead.' Then David rose from the earth, washed and anointed himself, changed his garments, and he went into the temple of Jehovah and worshipped. After that he went to his own house; and he asked for bread and they set it before him, and he ate.

His servants said to him, 'What is this you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while it was alive, but when the child died, you rose and ate bread.' He replied, 'While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, "Who knows whether Jehovah will have mercy, so that the child will live?" But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back? I am going to him, but he will not come back to me.'

Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and she bore a son whom he named Solomon; and Jehovah loved him.

97. Absalom's Rebellion

Some time later David's son Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and fifty men to run before him. He used to rise early and stand beside the highway which led to the city gate; and every man who had a suit that was to come before the ruler for judgment he would call to himself and say, 'Of what city are you?' When he replied, 'Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel,' Absalom would say to him, 'Your claims are good and right; but there is no one authorized by the ruler to hear you. Oh that some one would make me judge in the land, so that every man who has any suit or cause would come to me, and I would see that he received justice!' And whenever a man came near to do obeisance, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. In this way Absalom treated all the Israelites who came to David for justice. So Absalom stole the hearts of the Israelites.

At the end of four years, Absalom said to his father, 'I should like to go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to Jehovah in Hebron.' David said to him, 'Go in peace.' So he set out and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent messengers to all the tribes of Israel to say, 'As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, cry, "Absalom has become ruler in Hebron."' With Absalom there went two hundred men from Jerusalem, who were invited and went in their innocence, knowing nothing at all of what was intended. Absalom also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from the city of Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people with Absalom kept increasing.

When a messenger came to David, saying, 'The

loyalty of the men of Israel has been transferred to Absalom,' David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, 'Up, let us flee; for otherwise there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Make haste to set out, for fear that he quickly overtake us and bring calamity upon us and massacre the inhabitants of the city.' Then David's servants said to him, 'It shall be done as our lord chooses; we are your servants.'

So David and all the people who followed him went out and stood at the last house, while all the officers and the royal body-guard and all the men of Ittai the Gittite, the six hundred who had followed him from Gath, passed in review before him.

Then David said to Ittai the Gittite, 'Why do you wish to go with us? Return and stay with the new ruler, for you are a foreigner and an exile from your own land. Yesterday you came, and to-day shall I make you wander with us, while I go where I may? Return and take your fellow countrymen back with you, and may Jehovah show you kindness and faithfulness.' But Ittai answered, 'As surely as Jehovah lives and as my lord the ruler of Israel lives, wherever my lord is, whether dead or living, there your servant will be!' Then David said to Ittai, 'March on.' So Ittai, the Gittite, marched on with all his men and with all the children who were with him.

All the people were weeping aloud while David stood in the Kidron valley, and the people went by before him on the way to the wilderness. And Zadok and Abiathar came bearing the ark of Jehovah and set it down until all the people had passed. Then David said to Zadok, 'Carry the ark of God back into the *city. If* I win Jehovah's favor, he will bring me back *and show me both* it and his dwelling. But if he de-

clares, "I have no trust in you," then here am I, let him do to me as he thinks best.' So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem and remained there.

But David went up weeping, as he ascended the Mount of Olives with his head covered and his feet bare. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went. Then David and all the people set out and crossed the Jordan. By morning there was not one left behind; and David went on to Mahanaim.

98. The Defeat and Death of Absalom

After Absalom and all the men of Israel crossed the Jordan, David mustered the troops who were with him, and appointed over them commanders of thousands and of hundreds; and he divided the troops into three divisions; one was under the command of Joab, another under Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and another under the command of Ittai the Gittite. Then David said to the people, 'I too will surely go out with you.' But the people said, 'You shall not go out; for if we are routed, or if half of us die, it will make no difference, for you are equal to ten thousand of us. It is therefore more important for you to be ready to help us from the city.' David said to them, 'I will do what you think best!' So he stood beside the gate, while all the troops marched out by hundreds and by thousands.

David commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, 'Deal gently for my sake with the young man, with Absalom!' All the people heard when he gave the commanders this order regarding Absalom.

So the troops went out into the field against Israel.

The battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim; and the soldiers of Israel were defeated there by those who were loyal to David, and the slaughter on that day was great—twenty thousand men. The battle extended over the whole country; and the dense thickets killed more people than were killed by the sword.

Absalom happened to meet the soldiers of David while riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and Absalom's head caught fast in the oak, and he was hung between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on. A certain man saw it and told Joab, 'I saw Absalom hanging in an oak.' Joab said to the man who told him, 'You saw him! Why did you not strike him to the ground? My part would have been to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt.' But the man said to Joab, 'If I were to feel the weight of a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the ruler's son, for in our hearing he commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, "Take care of the young man Absalom." If I had treacherously taken his life, nothing would have been hidden from the ruler of Israel, and you yourself would have stood aloof.' Joab answered, 'I will not waste time with you.'

So he took three spears in his hand and drove them into Absalom's heart, while he was still alive in the midst of the oak. Then Joab said to a negro slave, 'Go, tell the ruler of Israel what you have seen.' And the negro bowed before Joab and ran off.

Now David was sitting between the two gates, and when the negro came, he said, 'Let my lord receive the good news; "Jehovah has avenged you this day upon all those who rose up against you."' David said to the negro, 'Is it well with the young Absalom?'

negro answered, 'May the enemies of my lord and who rebel against you to harm you be as that ng man!'

hen David was greatly distressed and went up to chamber over the gate and wept. And in his ping he said, 'My son Absalom, my son, my son alom! Oh that I had died for you, Absalom, my my son!' And it was reported to Joab, 'The of Israel is weeping and mourning for Absalom.' or all the people the victory that day was turned nourning, because they heard that David was ring for his son. Therefore the people stole away the city, as people who are ashamed steal away n they have fled in battle. But David covered ace and cried aloud, 'My son Absalom, Absalom, son, my son!'

I KINGS

SOLOMON'S AUTOCRATIC RULE

99. Solomon's Election

Now when David was advanced in years, Adonijah the son of Haggith cherished the ambitious thought, 'I will be ruler of Israel.' So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before him. His father had never in his life troubled him by saying, 'Why have you done thus and so?' He was exceedingly good-looking and was next son born after Absalom. He also had an understanding with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, to support his cause. But Zadok the priest and Benaiah the son of Jehoida and Nathan the prophet, as well as Shimei and Rei and David's famous warriors, did not support him.

Adonijah held a sacrificial feast with sheep, oxen, and fat beasts by the Serpent's Stone, which is beside the Fuller's Spring; and he invited all his brothers, together with all the royal officials of Judah; but he did not invite the prophet Nathan and Benaiah nor the famous warriors nor his brother Solomon.

Then Nathan said to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, 'Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has been proclaimed ruler without David our lord knowing it? Now therefore let me advise you so that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. Go at once to David and say to him, "Did you not, my lord, swear to your servant that Solomon your son should succeed you? Why then has

Adonijah been made ruler?" While you are still talking with him, I will come in and confirm your words.'

So Bathsheba went into David's apartment; he was very old; and Abishag the Shunamite was caring for him. When David said, 'What do you wish?' she said to him, 'My lord, you swore to your servant by Jehovah: "Solomon your son shall succeed me." But now Adonijah has been made ruler, without your knowledge, my lord! Now, my lord, all the Israelites are looking to you, to tell them who shall succeed you. Otherwise, the result will be that, when my lord dies I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals.'

While she was still talking with David, Nathan the prophet came in. And they told David, 'Nathan the prophet is here.' So he came in and did obeisance before David with his face to the ground. Then Nathan said, 'My lord, have you said, "Adonijah shall succeed me"? For he has gone down this day and killed oxen and fat beasts and sheep in abundance and has invited all your sons and the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest; and there they are eating and drinking before him and saying, "May the new ruler Adonijah live!" But he has not invited me, even me your servant, nor Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoida, nor your servant Solomon. If this has been brought about by you, my lord, you have failed to show your servants who is to succeed my lord.'

Then David answered, 'Call Bathsheba to me.' So she came in and stood before him. Then David swore this oath: 'As surely as Jehovah lives, who has delivered me from all adversity, as I have sworn to you by Jehovah, the God of Israel, saying, "Solomon your son shall succeed me"; so I will certainly do to-day.' Then Bathsheba bowed her face to the earth and did

obeisance to David and said, 'May my lord live forever.'

Then David said, 'Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.' When they came before him he said to them, 'Take with you the servants of your lord. Let Solomon my son ride upon my own mule, bring him down to Gihon, and there let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him as ruler over Israel and blow the trumpet and say, "May Solomon the ruler live!" Then you shall go up after him, and he shall go in and sit upon my throne, for he shall succeed me; and I have appointed him to be chief over Israel and Judah.' Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered David, 'So may it be! May Jehovah confirm the words of my lord. As Jehovah has been with my lord, even so may he be with Solomon, and may he make his throne greater than the throne of my lord David!'

Then Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, together with the Philistine body guards, went down and put Solomon on David's mule and brought him to Gihon. Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of the tent and anointed Solomon and they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, 'May Solomon live!' Then all the people went up after him and the people played on flutes and rejoiced so loudly that the earth seemed to be shaken by the sound that they made.

Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it just as they had finished eating; and they were seized with terror and each rose up and went away. But Adonijah in his fear of Solomon went and caught hold of the horns of the altar. When it was reported to Solomon, 'See, Adonijah fears Solomon the ruler, for he has caught hold of the horns of the altar

and says, "Let Solomon swear to me first that he will not kill his servant with the sword,"' Solomon said, 'If he shall show himself a worthy man, not one of his hairs shall be touched, but if he is found guilty of treason, he shall die.' So Solomon had him brought from the altar. And he came and did obeisance to Solomon the ruler; and Solomon said to him, 'Go to your home.'

Then David died and was buried in the City of David; and Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father, and his rule was firmly established.

100. Solomon's Wisdom

Then Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place; a thousand burnt-offerings he offered upon that altar.

In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night and said, 'Ask what I shall give you.' Solomon said, 'Thou hast showed to thy servant David my father great kindness. Now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant ruler in the place of David my father, although I am but a child who does not know how to go out or come in. Give thy servant, therefore, an attentive mind to rule thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to rule this thy great people?'

Jehovah was pleased that Solomon had made this request; and God said to him, 'Because you have made this request and have not asked for yourself long life nor riches nor the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself insight to discern what is just, I have now granted your request: I have given you a wise and discerning mind. I have also given you that which you have not asked, both riches and honor.'

When Solomon awoke, he found that it was a dream; and he returned to Jerusalem.

Once two harlots came to Solomon and stood before him. The one woman said, 'Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house. While with her in the house I gave birth to a child. Three days later this woman also gave birth to a child, and we were alone by ourselves in the house. While we two were alone this woman's child died in the night, because she lay upon it.

'Then she arose at midnight and took my son from beside me, while your servant slept, and laid it on her breast and laid her dead child on mine. When I rose at dawn to nurse my child, there it was dead; but when I looked at it closely in the morning, I discovered that it was not my son. Then the other woman said, "No; the living is my son, and the dead child is your son."' So they wrangled before Solomon.

Then Solomon said, 'One says, "This one who is alive is my son, and your son is dead." But the other says, "No; your son is dead, and my son is the one who is alive." Bring me a sword.' So they brought him a sword. Then he said, 'Divide the living child in two and give half to the one and half to the other.' At that the woman to whom the living child belonged spoke to Solomon—for her heart yearned for her son—and said, 'Oh, my lord, give her the living child and on no account put it to death.' But the other said, 'It shall be neither mine nor yours! Divide it!' Then Solomon said, 'Give the first woman the living child, and on no account put it to death; she is his mother.'

When all Israel heard of the decision which Solomon had rendered, they had great respect for him, for they saw that he possessed divine wisdom to dispense *justice.*

101. The Building of Solomon's Temple

In the fourth year of Solomon's rule over Israel he built the temple of Jehovah. The length of the temple was ninety feet and its breadth thirty feet, and its height forty-five feet. The porch before the large room of the temple was thirty feet wide corresponding to the breadth of the temple, and fifteen feet deep. And he made windows for the temple with casings broad on the inside and narrow on the outside.

Against the wall of the temple on the outside he built wings, both around the larger room and the inner sanctuary, and made side-chambers about the temple. The lower side-chamber was seven and a half feet wide, the middle nine, and the third ten feet wide, for on the outside he made flying buttresses about the temple that the beams might not be set into the walls of the temple. In building the temple it was built with stone which had been made ready at the quarry; neither hammer nor chisel nor any iron tool was heard while the temple was building.

The entrance into the lower side-chambers was on the south side of the temple. Winding stairs led into the middle story, and from the middle into the third. And he built the wings against all sides of the temple, each seven and a half feet high; and they were joined to the temple with timbers of cedar. So he built the temple and finished it; and he covered it with cedar.

He covered the walls of the temple on the inside with boards of cedar from the floor of the temple to the rafters; and he covered the floor of the temple with boards of cypress.

He also partitioned off thirty feet in the back part of the temple with boards of cedar from the floor to the rafters: he built it as an inner room, even as the

most holy place. The temple, that is the large room in front of the inner sanctuary, was sixty feet long. And there was cedar in the interior of the temple with carving in the form of gourds and open flowers; all was cedar, no stone was seen. Solomon prepared the inner sanctuary in the interior of the temple in order to place there the ark which symbolized the solemn agreement between Jehovah and the people. And the inner sanctuary was thirty feet long, thirty feet wide and thirty feet in height.

In the inner room Solomon made two winged bulls of olive wood. The height of each was fifteen feet. Each of their wings measured seven and a half feet across, fifteen feet from the extremity of one wing to the extremity of the other. And he set these up in the inner sanctuary of the temple; and their wings were stretched out so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the temple; and he overlaid them with gold.

102. The Dedication of the Temple

Then Solomon gathered in Jerusalem the leaders of Israel to bring up the ark of Jehovah out of Zion, the City of David, at the time of the autumn festival in September. When all the leaders of Israel had come, the priests took up the ark and the tent of meeting and all the sacred vessels that were in the tent. And when the priests came out from the inner sanctuary, the cloud filled the temple of Jehovah, so that the priests could not stand and perform their service on account of the cloud, for the glory of Jehovah filled his temple.

Then Solomon said:

Jehovah has set the sun in the heavens,
But has said that he will dwell in thick darkness.
So I have built thee a temple as a lofty dwelling,
A place for thee to abide in forever.

As Solomon stood before the altar of Jehovah in the esence of all the assembly of Israel, he spread out s hands toward heaven and said, 'O Jehovah, the od of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven ove or on earth beneath, who keepest thy solemn reement and showest kindness to thy servants who rve thee whole-heartedly, who hast kept with thy rvant David my father the promise that thou didst ake to him.

'But will God actually dwell on earth? Indeed aven and the highest heaven cannot hold thee; how uch less this temple that I have built! Yet be tentive to the prayer of thy servant and to his supication, O Jehovah my God, that thou mayest hear e petition and the prayer which thy servant offers fore thee this day, that thine eyes may be open ward this temple night and day, even toward the ace of which thou hast said, "My name shall be ere," to listen to the prayer which thy servant shall fer toward this place. So hear thou the petition of y servant and of thy people Israel, when they shall ay toward this place; yea, hear thou in heaven thy velling place; and when thou hearest, forgive.

'If there be famine in the land, if there be pestilence, there be blasting or mildew, locust or caterpillar, if eir enemy besiege them in any of their gates; whatver plague, whatever sickness there be, whatever ayer and supplication be made by any man who ows his own personal affliction and spreads out his nds toward this temple, hear thou in heaven thy

dwelling place and forgive and act, and according to his deeds reward every man whose heart thou knowest (for thou, even thou alone knowest the hearts of all the children of men), that they may revere thee all the days that they live in the land which thou hast given to our fathers.

'Also to the foreigner, who is not of thy people Israel, but comes from a far country because of thy favor—for they shall hear of thy great name and of thy mighty power and of thy ability to deliver—when he shall come and pray toward this temple, then listen in heaven thy dwelling place, and do all that the foreigner requests of thee, that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name and revere thee, as does thy people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built bears thy name.'

103. The Wasteful Splendor of Solomon's Rule

Solomon was building his palace thirteen years before he entirely completed it. He also built the throne-hall where he dispensed justice, even the Hall of Judgment; and it was covered with cedar from floor to ceiling.

His palace where he lived, in another court further in from the Hall of Judgment, was of the same workmanship. He made a palace, too, similar to this hall, for Pharaoh's daughter (whom he had married).

All these buildings were of costly stones, hewn according to measurements, sawed with saws, both on the inside and outside, from the foundation to the coping and from the exterior to the great court. The foundation was of costly stones—huge stones twelve and fifteen feet long. The superstructure was also made of costly stones, hewn according to measurement, and of cedar wood.

King Solomon built a fleet of ships in Eziongeber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. Hiram of Tyre sent his subjects, sailors who knew the sea, with the servants of Solomon. They went to Ophir and took from there twenty-five tons of gold and brought it to Solomon.

Hiram's fleet of ships that carried gold from Ophir also brought a great amount of red sandal wood and precious stones. Out of the sandal wood from Ophir Solomon made pilasters for the temple of Jehovah and for the royal palace, and lyres and harps for the singers. No other such sandal wood has come since, nor has any like it been seen.

Solomon also gathered together chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen that he stationed in the chariot cities and with him at Jerusalem. And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel who provided food for him and for his household: each man had to make provision for a month in the year.

When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon she came to test him with puzzling questions. So she arrived at Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels that carried spices and a great quantity of gold and precious stones. As soon as she came to Solomon, she told him all that was in her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions: nothing was too obscure for him to answer.

When the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the palace that he had built, the food on his table, the housing of his courtiers, the attendance of his waiters, their clothing, his cup-bearers, and the burnt-offering which he offered at the temple of Jehovah, she was completely overwhelmed; and she said to Solomon, 'The report that I heard in my own land of your acts and of your wisdom was true. But I would

not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; but as it is, the half was not told me; you exceed in wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard.

'Happy are your wives! Happy are these courtiers of yours who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! Praised be Jehovah your God who was pleased with you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because Jehovah loved Israel forever, he has made you ruler that you may do what is just and right.' Then she gave Solomon twelve thousand pounds of gold and a huge store of spices and precious stones; never again did so many spices come as those which the queen of Sheba gave to him.

104. The Consequence of Solomon's Selfish Policy

Now Solomon loved women; and he married many foreign wives—Moabites, Canaanites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites, and Ammonites. He had seven hundred wives, of princely birth, and three hundred concubines; and when Solomon was old, his wives influenced him to worship other gods, and he was not loyal to Jehovah his God. Solomon built a place of worship for Chemosh, the god of Moab, on the hill that is opposite Jerusalem, and for Milcom the god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, burning incense and sacrificing to their gods.

Then God raised up as a foe against him Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah. He gathered men about him and became commander of a marauding band, and he went to Damascus and lived and reigned there. He was a foe to Israel as long as Solomon lived.

Jeroboam the son of Nebat, whose mother was a widow named Zeruah, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, one of Solomon's officials, also revolted against him. This was the reason why he did so: Solomon built Millo and closed up the exposed place in the City of David his father. Jeroboam was a man of great ability, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious, he placed him in charge of all the forced labor imposed on the tribe of Joseph.

Now it happened at one time, when Jeroboam had gone away from Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah of Shilo met him on the highway and took him aside. Ahijah had put on a new garment, and while they two were alone in the open country, Ahijah took hold of the new garment that he had on and tore it in twelve pieces. Then he said to Jeroboam, 'Take ten pieces for yourself; for this is the message from Jehovah the God of Israel, "I will tear the authority out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you, but he shall have one tribe."'

Solomon therefore endeavored to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Shishak king of Egypt and remained there.

THE PROBLEMS AND PROPHETS OF THE NORTHERN STATE

105. Israel's Revolt Against Autocracy

Then Solomon died, and Rehoboam his son succeeded him. As soon as Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it—for he was still in Egypt where he had fled from the presence of Solomon—he returned at once to his native town, Zeredah in Mount Ephraim.

Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had come to Shechem to proclaim him ruler. But they said to Rehoboam, 'Your father laid a burdensome yoke upon us. Now therefore make the burdensome service of your father and the heavy yoke that he laid upon us lighter, and we will serve you.' He said to them, 'Go away for three days, then come again to me.' So the people went away.

Then Rehoboam took counsel with the old men who had been in the service of Solomon his father during his lifetime and inquired, 'What answer do you advise me to give this people?' They said to him, 'If now you will serve this people and will give them a favorable answer, then they will be your servants forever.'

But he rejected the counsel which the old men had given him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and had been in his service. And he said to them, 'What answer do you advise that we give to the people who have said to me, "Make the yoke that your father laid upon us lighter"?' The young men who had grown up with him said to him, 'Make this answer to them: "My little finger is thicker than my father's loins! While my father

loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will make your yoke heavier; my father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scourges."'

So when all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as he had directed, he answered the people autocratically and did not follow the counsel which the old men had given him, but spoke to them as the young men had advised, saying, 'My father made your yoke heavy, but I will make your yoke still heavier; my father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scourges.' So Rehoboam paid no heed to the demand of the people.

When all Israel saw that he paid no heed to their demand they gave him this answer: 'What interest have we in David? We have nothing in common with the son of Jesse! To your tents, O Israel! Now look out for your house, O David!'

So the Israelites went to their homes.

Then Rehoboam sent to them Adoniram, who was over the men subject to forced labor; but when all the Israelites stoned him to death, Rehoboam quickly mounted his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. So Israel has refused to pay allegiance to the house of David to the present day.

As soon as all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly of the people and proclaimed him ruler over all Israel. None remained loyal to the house of David except the tribe of Judah.

106. The Protest and Exile of Elijah the Tishbite

In the thirty-first year of Asa the ruler of Judah, Omri began to rule over Israel and ruled twelve years,

six years he ruled in Tirzah. Then he bought the hill Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; and he built a city on the hill and named it Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill.

When Omri died, Ahab his son succeeded him. But Ahab the son of Omri displeased Jehovah more than all his predecessors. He married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and then began to worship the Phœnician god Baal. He also erected an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

Then Elijah from Tishbe in Gilead said to Ahab, 'As surely as Jehovah the God of Israel lives, whom I serve, there shall be no dew nor rain these years except as I announce it.'

Then this message from Jehovah came to him, 'Go eastward from here and hide yourself by the Brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.'

So he obeyed the command of Jehovah and lived by the Brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread in the morning and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. But after a while the brook dried up, for there had been no rain in the land.

Then this message from Jehovah came to him, 'Arise, go to Zarephath which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.' So he went to Zarephath.

When he came to the gate of the city, a widow was there gathering sticks. Calling to her, he said, 'Bring me, I beg of you, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.' As she was going to get it, he called after her, 'Bring also a bit of bread with you.' She replied, 'As

surely as Jehovah your God lives, I have nothing baked, and only one handful of meal in the jar and a little oil in the jug; and now I am gathering a few sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.' Elijah said to her, 'Fear not; go and do as you have said, but first bake for me a little dough and bring it to me; afterward make some for yourself and your son. For Jehovah the God of Israel declares: "The jar of meal shall not be empty, nor shall the jug of oil fail, until Jehovah sends rain upon the earth."'

So she did as Elijah directed; and she and her household, as well as Elijah, had food to eat. From that day the jar of meal was never empty and the jug of oil did not fail, as Jehovah had said through Elijah.

Now after this the woman's son fell sick; and his sickness was so severe that he ceased to breathe. So she said to Elijah, 'What have I to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to remind me of my sin by taking the life of my son!' He said to her, 'Give me your son.' So he took him out of her arms and carried him up into the upper room where he was staying and laid him on his own bed. Then he prayed earnestly to Jehovah and said, 'O Jehovah, my God, hast thou also brought misfortune upon this widow, with whom I am staying, by taking the life of her son?' And he stretched himself upon the child three times and prayed to Jehovah and said, 'O Jehovah, my God, I entreat thee, restore this child's life to him again.'

So Jehovah listened to Elijah's petition; and the life of the child came back to him again, so that he revived. Then Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and said, 'See, your son lives!' The

woman said to him, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the message of Jehovah that you proclaim is true.'

107. The Choice Between Material and Spiritual Ideals

In the third year of the famine this command came from Jehovah to Elijah: 'Go, show yourself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.' So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab.

The famine was so severe in Samaria that Ahab had summoned Obadiah, the prefect of the palace. Obadiah was exceedingly loyal to Jehovah; for when Jezebel tried to exterminate the prophets of Jehovah, he took a hundred and hid them in a cave and kept them supplied with bread and water. Ahab said to Obadiah, 'Come, let us go through the land to all the springs and to all the brooks, in the hope that we may find grass, so that we can save the horses and mules and not lose all of them.' So they divided the land between them, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.

While Obadiah was on the way, Elijah suddenly met him. As soon as Obadiah recognized him, he fell on his face and said, 'Is it you, my lord Elijah?' He answered, 'It is; go, tell your master: "Elijah is here."' But Obadiah said, 'What sin have I committed, that you would deliver your servant over to Ahab to kill me? As surely as Jehovah your God lives, there is no nation nor kingdom where my lord has not sent to seek you; and when they said, "He is not here," he made each of the kingdoms and nations take an oath, that no one had found you. Now you say, "Go, tell your lord, Elijah is here!" As soon as I have left you

the spirit of Jehovah will carry you to a place unknown to me, so that when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will put me to death, although I, your servant, have been loyal to Jehovah from my youth!' Elijah answered, 'As surely as Jehovah of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will show myself to Ahab to-day.'

So Obadiah went to Ahab and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. As soon as Ahab saw Elijah, he said to him, 'Is it you, you who have brought misfortune to Israel?' He answered, 'I have not brought misfortune to Israel, but you and your father's house, in that you have failed to follow the commands of Jehovah and have run after the Phœnician gods. Now therefore call together for me at Mount Carmel all the Israelites and the four hundred and fifty prophets of the god Baal who eat at Jezebel's table.'

So Ahab sent for all the Israelites and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. Then Elijah came to the people and said, 'How long are you going to falter between the two religions? If Jehovah is the true God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him.' But the people were silent. Then Elijah said to the people, 'I, even I only, am left as a prophet of Jehovah, but there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. Let us take two oxen; let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, without kindling any fire, and I will dress the other ox and lay it on wood, without kindling any fire. Then you call on your god and I will call on Jehovah. The god who answers by fire is the true God.' All the people answered and said, 'It is a fair offer.'

Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one of the oxen for yourselves and dress it first, for you are many, and call on your god, without kindling

any fire.' So they took the ox which he gave them and dressed it, and called on their god from morning until noon, saying, 'O Baal, hear us.' But there was no voice nor answer, although they leaped about the altar which they had built.

When it was noon, Elijah mocked them, saying, 'Call loudly, for he is a god; either he is musing, or he has gone aside, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened!' Then they called loudly and cut themselves, as was their custom, with swords and lances until the blood gushed out upon them. When midday was past, they cried out in frenzy until the time of the offering of the evening oblation; but there was neither voice nor answer nor was any attention paid to their cry.

Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come near to me.' And all the people drew near to him, and he repaired the altar of Jehovah which had been thrown down. Then around the altar he made a trench that would hold about two bushels of seed. When he had placed the pieces of wood in order, he cut up the ox and laid it on the wood. Then he said, 'Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt-offering and on the pieces of wood.' And he said, 'Do it the second time'; and they did it the second time. He said, 'Do it the third time'; and they did it the third time, so that the water ran round the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

When it was time to offer the evening oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, 'O Jehovah, God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy command. Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, *and that thou* mayst win their hearts.'

Then the fire of Jehovah fell and consumed the burnt-offering and the wood, the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell prostrate and cried, 'Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.' But Elijah commanded them, 'Take the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape!' So they took them down to the Brook Kishon and there put them to death.

Then Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go, eat and drink; for there are signs of a heavy rain.' So Ahab went to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel and crouched down upon the earth, with his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, 'Go up now, look toward the sea.' So he went up and looked and said, 'There is nothing.' But seven times he said, 'Go again.' So the servant went back seven times, but the seventh time he said, 'There is a cloud as small as a man's hand rising out of the sea.' Then Elijah said, 'Go, say to Ahab, "Make ready your chariot; go down, that the rain may not stop you."' In a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. And as Ahab rode toward Jezreel, Elijah was given divine strength, so that he tightened his belt and ran before Ahab to the entrance to Jezreel.

108. Elijah's Clearer Vision of God's Nature and Methods

Now when Ahab told Jezebel that Elijah had put the prophets to death with the sword, she sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'As surely as you are Elijah and I am Jezebel, may the gods do to me what they will and more too, if I do not make your life as the life of one of those prophets by to-morrow about this time.'

Then he was afraid and fled for his life. And he came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he went on a day's journey into the wilderness and sat down under a broom tree, and he asked that he might die, saying, 'It is enough; now, O Jehovah, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers.'

Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree, but an angel touched him and said to him, 'Rise, eat!' When he looked, he saw there at his head a loaf, baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. But the angel of Jehovah came again the second time and touched him and said, 'Rise, eat, or else the journey will be too long for you.' So he rose and ate and drank and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mountain of God.

Then Jehovah passed by, and an exceedingly violent wind tore the mountain apart and broke the rocks in pieces before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire. After the fire there was the sound of a low whisper. As soon as Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then he heard a voice saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I have been very jealous for Jehovah the God of hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken thee, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I only am left; and they seek to take my life.'

Then Jehovah said to him, 'On your way back go to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you arrive there, anoint Hazael to rule over Aram, Jehu the son

of Nimshi to rule over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah to be prophet in your place. Then whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death. Yet I will spare seven thousand in Israel—all who have not worshipped Baal and kissed his image.'

After he had left, Elijah found Elisha the son of Shaphat, as he was ploughing with twelve pairs of oxen. When Elijah went up to him and threw his mantle upon him, he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, 'Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.' Elijah said to him, 'Go back, for what have I done to you?' So Elisha turned back and took one pair of oxen and offered them as a sacrifice and, using the wooden ploughs and yokes as fuel, boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people to eat. Then he arose and followed Elijah and served him.

109. Elijah's Defense of the Rights of the People

Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel adjoining the palace of Ahab, who ruled at Samaria. So Ahab said to Naboth, 'Give me your vineyard, that I may have it as a vegetable garden, for it is near my palace; and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it is more satisfactory to you, I will pay you its value in money.' But Naboth answered Ahab, 'May Jehovah save me from the crime of giving you the inheritance of my fathers!'

So Ahab went into his house sullen and in ill-humor because of what Naboth had said to him; and he lay down on his bed and covered his face and would eat no food.

But Jezebel his wife came to him and said, 'Why are you in such bad humor that you will not eat?' He replied, 'Because I made this offer to Naboth the Jezreelite, "Give me your vineyard for its value in money, or else, if it is more satisfactory to you, I will give you another vineyard for it"; but he answered, "I will not give you my vineyard."' Then Jezebel his wife said to him, 'Are you not the one who now rules in Israel? Rise, eat, and set your mind at rest. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.'

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal and sent the letters to the elders and the officials who lived in Naboth's city. In the letters she wrote, 'Proclaim a fast and put Naboth in front of the people. Then set up two unprincipled men before him and let them bring this charge against him: "You cursed God and the ruler of Israel." Then carry him out and stone him to death.'

The elders and the officials of Naboth's city did as Jezebel commanded in her letters to them: They proclaimed a fast and put Naboth in front of the people. Then the two unprincipled men came in and sat before him, and the scoundrels testified against him in the presence of the people, saying, 'Naboth cursed God and the ruler of Israel.' Then they carried him out of the city and stoned him to death. And they reported to Jezebel, 'Naboth has been stoned to death.'

As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death she said to Ahab, 'Rise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to sell you, for Naboth is not alive but dead.' And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he went down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it. But this command

came from Jehovah to Elijah the Tishbite, 'Rise, go down to meet Ahab the ruler of Israel, who lives in Samaria; he is just now in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession of it. Say to him, "This is the message of Jehovah, 'Have you killed and also taken possession? In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth they shall also lick your blood.'"' Ahab said to Elijah, 'Have you found me, O my enemy?' He answered, 'I have. Also Jehovah has declared regarding you: "The dogs shall devour Jezebel in the district of Jezreel."' When Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted; he also slept in sackcloth and behaved penitently.

110. The Overthrow of an Unscrupulous Aggressor

Then Benhadad the king of Aram mustered his army, and there were thirty-two kings with him and horses and chariots; and he besieged Samaria and fought against it. He sent messengers into the city to Ahab and said to him, 'Benhadad declares, "Your silver and your gold are mine; your wives and your children are also mine."' The ruler of Israel answered, 'As you say, my lord, O king: I am yours with all that I have.'

But the messengers came again and said, 'Benhadad declares, "I sent to you this message, 'You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold and your wives and your children'; but to-morrow I will send my servants about this time and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants; and whatever is attractive to them, they shall take in their hands and bring away."'

Then Ahab called all the elders of the land and said,

'You can plainly see this man is seeking to make trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and gold, and I did not refuse him.' All the elders and all the people said to him, 'Do not listen nor consent!' So he said to the messengers of Benhadad, 'Tell my lord the king, "All that you demanded of your servant at the first I will do, but this I can not do."'

So the messengers departed and brought him word. Then Benhadad sent to Ahab and said, 'Let the gods do to me what they will, if the dust of Samaria shall be enough to fill the hands of all the people who follow me!' Ahab answered, 'Tell him, "Let not the one who fastens on his sword boast as the one who puts it off."' When Benhadad heard this message, as he was drinking together with the kings, in the pavilions, he said to his servants, 'Get ready for battle!' So they prepared to attack the city.

But just then a prophet came to Ahab and said, 'This is the message of Jehovah, "Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand to-day, that you may know that I am Jehovah."' Ahab said, 'By whom?' He said, 'Jehovah declares, "By the young men under the provincial commanders."' Ahab said, 'Who shall begin the battle?' He answered, 'You.'

So Ahab mustered the young men under the provincial commanders; and they were two hundred and thirty-two. And after them he mustered the Israelites, seven thousand in all. At noon they made the attack, while Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, together with the thirty-two kings who had come to help him. And the young men under the provincial commanders went out first. When *Benhadad sent out* messengers, they reported, 'Men

have come out from Samaria.' He said, 'If they have come out with peaceful intent, take them alive, or if they have come out to fight, take them alive.'

So the young men under the provincial commanders went out of the city followed by the army. After they had killed each his man, the Arameans fled, and the Israelites pursued them; but Benhadad, the king of Aram, escaped on a horse accompanied by cavalrymen. And Ahab went out and captured horses and chariots and killed a great number of the Arameans.

Then the servants of the king of Aram said to him, 'Their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were too strong for us; but let us fight against them in the plain, and we shall surely prove stronger than they. And do this: remove the kings from their posts and put military officers in their places and assemble an army like the one you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot; then we will fight against them in the plain and we shall surely prove stronger then they.' And he listened to their advice and did so.

A year later Benhadad mustered the Arameans and went to Aphek to fight against Israel. The Israelites were also mustered and provided with provisions, and went out against them. But the Israelites encamped opposite them were like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans filled the country.

Then a man of God came near and said to Ahab, 'Jehovah declares, "Because the Arameans think Jehovah is a god of the hills but not of the valleys, that you may know that I am Jehovah, I will deliver all this great multitude into your power."'

So they encamped opposite each other seven days; but on the seventh day the battle was fought and the Israelites killed a hundred thousand of the Aramean infantry in one day. But the rest fled to the town of

Aphek; and the wall fell upon twenty-seven thousand of the men who were left.

Benhadad also fled, and his servants said to him, 'Now we have heard that the rulers of Israel are merciful; so let us put sackcloth about our waists and ropes about our heads and go to the ruler of Israel; perhaps he will save your life.'

So they wound sackcloth about their waists and put ropes about their heads and went to the ruler of Israel and said, 'Your servant Benhadad says, "Let me live."' Ahab replied, 'Is he still alive? He is my brother.' Interpreting this as a favorable sign, the men quickly caught up his words and said, 'Benhadad is your brother.' Then Ahab said, 'Go, bring him.' When Benhadad came out to him, Ahab took him up into his own chariot. And Benhadad said to Ahab, 'I will restore the cities which my father took from your father; and you may establish bazaars for yourself in Damascus, as my father established them in Samaria.' Ahab said, 'I will let you go with this understanding.' So he made a treaty with him and let him go.

111. Micaiah's Loyalty to His Convictions

For three years there was no war between Aram and Israel. But in the third year, when Jehoshaphat the ruler of Judah came to visit the ruler of Israel, Ahab said to his servants, 'Do you not know that Ramoth in Gilead belongs to us; yet we sit still instead of taking it from the king of Aram?' Then he asked Jehoshaphat, 'Will you go with me to attack Ramoth in Gilead?' Jehoshaphat replied, 'I am with you, my people are as your people, my horses as your horses.'

But Jehoshaphat said to the ruler of Israel, 'Inquire now what Jehovah has to say.' So Ahab gathered the

prophets together (in all about four hundred men), and asked them, 'Shall I go to fight against Ramoth in Gilead or shall I not?' They said, 'Go up; for Jehovah will deliver it into your hands.' But Jehoshaphat said, 'Is there any other prophet of Jehovah, that we may ask him?' The ruler of Israel answered, 'There is another by whom we may inquire of Jehovah, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I hate him; for he predicts for me nothing good, but only evil.' Jehoshaphat said, 'Do not say so.'

Then the ruler of Israel called a court-attendant and said, 'Bring quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah.'

Now while Ahab and Jehoshaphat were each sitting on his throne clothed in his robes of state at the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them, Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron and said, 'Jehovah declares, "With these you shall strike down the Arameans until you have destroyed them!"' All the prophets prophesied the same, saying, 'Go up to Ramoth in Gilead; for Jehovah will deliver it over to you.'

The messenger who went to call Micaiah said to him, 'See, the prophets have with one accord promised the ruler of Israel success. Agree with them, and predict success.' But Micaiah said, 'As surely as Jehovah lives, I will speak what he says to me.'

When he came to Ahab, he said to him, 'Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth in Gilead to fight, or shall we not?' He answered him, 'Go up and conquer! Jehovah will deliver it into your hands!' But Ahab said to him, 'How many times shall I adjure you to speak nothing to me in the name of Jehovah but the truth?' He said, 'I saw all the Israelites scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And

Jehovah said, "These have no master; let each of them go home in peace!"'

The ruler of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'Did I not tell you that he would predict for me nothing good, but only evil?' Micaiah said, 'Hear then the message from Jehovah: I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne and all the host of heaven standing about him. And Jehovah said, "Who will delude Ahab, so that he will go up and fall at Ramoth in Gilead?" One proposed one thing and another another, until a spirit came out and stood before Jehovah and said, "I will mislead him." Jehovah said to him, "By what means?" He said, "I will go out and become a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." Then Jehovah said, "You shall succeed in misleading him. Go out and do so." So Jehovah has now put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, for he has determined to bring disaster upon you.'

Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah a blow on the cheek and said, 'How was it that the spirit of Jehovah went from me to speak to you?' Micaiah replied, 'Indeed, you shall see on the day when you shall go from one hiding-place to another.' Then the ruler of Israel said, 'Take Micaiah back to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the ruler's son, and say, "This is the ruler's command: Put this fellow in prison and feed him with a scanty fare of bread and water until I return successful."' Micaiah said, 'If you indeed return successful, Jehovah has not spoken by me.'

Then the ruler of Israel and Jehoshaphat the ruler of Judah went up to Ramoth in Gilead. And the ruler of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'I will disguise myself and go into the battle, but you can put on your robes.' *But a certain man* drew the bow at a venture and

struck the ruler of Israel between the breast plate and the lower part of his armor. So Ahab said to the driver of his chariot, 'Turn about and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded.' But the battle grew more intense, so that Ahab remained until evening propped up in his chariot in the sight of the Arameans, and the blood ran out of the wound into the bottom of the chariot. But that evening he died.

About sunset the cry went throughout the army, 'Each to his town and each to his land, for the ruler is dead!' So they came to Samaria and buried Ahab there. And when they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, the dogs licked up his blood and the harlots washed themselves in it, just as Jehovah had declared.

II KINGS

ELISHA THE PASTOR AND COUNSELLOR OF THE PEOPLE

112. The Mantle of Elijah

When Jehovah took up Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind he was going with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here, for Jehovah has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As surely as Jehovah lives and as you live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel.

Then the followers of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and said, 'Do you know that to-day Jehovah will take away your master from you?' He said, 'Yes, I know it; say no more.' And Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here, for Jehovah has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As surely as Jehovah lives and as you live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho.

Then the followers of the prophets at Jericho came near to Elisha and said, 'Do you know that to-day Jehovah will take your master from you?' He answered, 'Yes, I know it; say no more.' And Elijah said to him, 'Stay here, for Jehovah has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As surely as Jehovah lives and as you live, I will not leave you.' So they both went on.

Fifty followers of the prophets stood opposite them at a distance, while they two stood by the Jordan. Then Elijah rolled up his mantle and with it struck the waters; and they were divided, so that they two went over on dry ground. When they had gone over,

Elijah said to Elisha, 'Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.' He replied, 'You have asked what is difficult; but if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall come to you; but if you do not, it shall not come.'

As they were going on their way talking, a fiery chariot with horses of fire suddenly came and separated the two; and Elijah went up in a whirlwind to heaven. When Elisha saw it, he cried, 'My father, my father! the chariots and the horsemen of Israel!' And he saw Elijah no more, but he took hold of his own robes and tore them in two. Then he took up the mantle that had fallen from Elijah.

113. The Restoration of the Shunamite's Son

One day Elisha went over to Shunem where a prominent woman lived, and she persuaded him to be her guest. Afterward, whenever he passed by, he stopped there to eat. So she said to her husband, 'Now I see that this is a holy man of God who is constantly passing by our door. Let us make a little chamber on the roof, so that whenever he comes to us, he can stay there.'

One day when he came, he went into the upper room and lay down there. Then he said to Gehazi his servant, 'Call this Shunamite.' So he called her, and she stood before him. Elisha said to Gehazi, 'Say now to her, "See, you have been so anxious to care for us; what can be done for you? Might we commend you to the favor of the ruler or to the commander of the army?"' She answered, 'I live surrounded by my own people.' Elisha said, 'What then can be done for

her?' Gehazi answered, 'Verily she has no son, and her husband is old.' Then Elisha said, 'Call her.' So he called her, and she stood at the door. Then Elisha said, 'At this time a year from now you shall clasp a son in your arms!' But she said, 'No, my lord, O man of God, do not deceive your servant!' But the next year the woman gave birth to a son at the same season as Elisha had promised her.

When the child was grown, he went out one day to his father to the reapers. And he called to his father, 'My head, my head!' So his father said to his servant, 'Carry him to his mother.' When he had been taken to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon and then died. His mother went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door as she went out.

Then she called her husband and said, 'Send me one of the servants and one of the asses, that I may go quickly to the man of God and return.' He said, 'Why do you go to him to-day, for it is neither new moon nor sabbath?' She said, 'I have good reason.'

Then she saddled an ass and said to her servant, 'Drive on fast, do not stop until I tell you.' So she went to the man of God on Mount Carmel. But when Elisha saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, 'See, there is the Shunamite! Run down to meet her and say to her, "Is all well with you? Is your husband well? Is the child well?"' And she answered, 'All is well.' But when she came to the man of God on the mountain, she caught hold of his feet; and when Gehazi tried to push her away, Elisha said, 'Let her alone, for she is deeply troubled and Jehovah has not told me the reason.' Then she said, 'Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, "Do not deceive me?"'

Elisha said to Gehazi, 'Tighten your belt, take my staff in your hand and go! If you meet any one, do not greet him, and if any greets you do not answer him, and lay my staff on the face of the child.' But the mother of the child said, 'As surely as Jehovah lives and as you live, I will not leave you.' So he rose and went with her. And Gehazi had gone on before them and had laid the staff upon the face of the child, but there was neither sound nor sign of life in the boy. So he went back to meet him and told him, 'The child has not awakened.'

When Elisha came into the house, there was the child lying dead on his bed. So he went in and shut the door upon them and prayed to Jehovah. He also went up and lay upon the child and put his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and as he lay upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. Then he turned and walked backward and forward in the house, and again went up and lay upon him, and the child sneezed seven times, and then opened his eyes. Calling Gehazi, he said, 'Summon this Shunamite.' So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, 'Take up your son.' Then she went nearer, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; after that she took up her son and went out.

114. The Healing of Naaman

Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a man who enjoyed the favor of his master and was held in high esteem, for through him Jehovah had given victory to Aram. He was a man of ability but was a leper. Now the Arameans had gone out on a marauding expedition and had brought away cap-

tive from the land of Israel a little maid who became the servant of Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, 'O that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would relieve him of his leprosy!' So he went in and told his lord what the maid from the land of Israel had said. The king of Aram said, 'Go now, and I will send a letter to the ruler of Israel.'

So he departed and took with him a thousand pounds of silver and six thousand gold pieces and ten festal robes. He also brought to the ruler of Israel the letter, which read: 'This letter is to inform you that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy.' When the ruler of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, 'Am I a god, who can kill and make alive, that this king sends a man to me to cure him of his leprosy? But you can clearly see that he is seeking a quarrel with me!'

When Elisha the man of God heard that the ruler of Israel was tearing his clothes, he sent this message to him: 'Why are you tearing your clothes? Let him come now to me and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel!' So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him to say, 'Go and wash seven times in the Jordan and your flesh will again be well and clean.'

But Naaman went away in a rage, saying, 'I expected that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of Jehovah his God and wave his hand over the place, and so cure the leper. Are not Amana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?' So he turned and went away in a rage. But his servants came near and said to him,

'If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? Why not, then, when he says to you, "Wash and be clean!"' So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan as the man of God commanded, and his flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was cleansed of his leprosy.

Then Naaman, with all his retinue, returned to the man of God. When he arrived, he stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no god in all the earth, but in Israel; therefore accept a present from your servant.' But Elisha said, 'As surely as Jehovah lives, before whom I stand, I will take nothing.' And although he urged him to take it, he refused. Then Naaman said, 'If not, at least let there be given to your servant a load of earth, what two mules can draw, for your servant will hereafter offer burnt-offering and sacrifice to no other god but Jehovah.' And Elisha said to him, 'Go, and may prosperity attend you.'

"But when he had gone from him a short distance, Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, thought to himself, 'My master has let this Naaman the Aramean go without accepting what he brought! As surely as Jehovah lives, I will run after him and take something from him.' So Gehazi ran after Naaman; and when Naaman saw some one running after him, he stepped down from the chariot to meet him and said, 'Is all well?' Gehazi replied, 'All is well. My master has sent me to say, "Just now two young men of the followers of the prophets have come to me from the highland of Ephraim. Give them a hundred pounds of silver and two festal robes."' Naaman said, 'Consent to take twice as much silver.' So he urged him and bound up two hundred pounds of silver in two

bags, with two festal robes, and laid them on two of his servants, and they carried them before Gehazi. But when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and stored them in the house and let the men go.

Then he went in; but when he stood before his master, Elisha said to him, 'Where do you come from, Gehazi?' He answered, 'Your servant has not been anywhere.' But Elisha said to him, 'Was I not in spirit with you when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Now you have received money and you may acquire clothes, oliveyards, vineyards, sheep, oxen, and male and female slaves; but the leprosy of Naaman shall stick to you and to your descendants forever.' Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence a leper as white as snow.

115. Elisha's Vision of the Spirit Helpers

Once while the king of Aram was at war with Israel, he took counsel with his officers saying, 'In such and such a place we shall lie in ambush.' But the man of God sent word to the ruler of Israel, 'Take care that you do not pass that place, for the Arameans are concealed there.' So the ruler of Israel sent soldiers to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he repeatedly warned him, so that he could there be on his guard.

The king of Aram was greatly disturbed by this, and he called his officers and said to them, 'Can you not tell me who has betrayed us to the ruler of Israel?' One of his officers replied, 'No one, my lord, O king, for Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the ruler of Israel the words that you speak in your bedchamber.' The king said, 'Go and see where he is, that I may send

and seize him.' And it was reported to him, 'He is now in Dothan.'

So the king sent horses and chariots there and a great army, and they arrived at night and surrounded the city. When the man of God rose early the next morning and went out, an army with horses and chariots was about the city, so that his servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?' He answered, 'Fear not, for they who are with us are more than they who are with them.' And Elisha prayed and said, 'Jehovah open his eyes, that he may see.' Then Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw that the highlands around about Elisha were full of horses and chariots of fire.

When the Arameans came toward him, Elisha besought Jehovah, and said, 'Afflict this people with blindness.' So Jehovah afflicted them with blindness, as Elisha asked. Then Elisha said to them, 'This is not the way nor the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek!' So he led them to Samaria.

But as soon as they came to Samaria, Elisha said, 'O Jehovah, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.' And Jehovah opened their eyes, so that they could see, and there they were in Samaria. When the ruler of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, 'My father, shall I cut them down?' Elisha answered, 'You shall not cut them down; would you cut down those whom you have not taken captive with your sword nor with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.' So he prepared a great feast for them; and when they had had food and drink, he sent them back to their master. So the marauding bands of Arameans no longer invaded the land of Israel.

116. The Deliverance of Samaria

Later, Benhadad king of Aram assembled all his army and besieged Samaria. The famine was so severe in Samaria while they were besieging it, that an ass's head was sold for eighty pieces of silver, and a pint of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.

Once as the ruler of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, 'Help, my lord.' He replied, 'If Jehovah does not help you, from where can I bring help to you? From the threshing-floor or from the winepress?' However, the ruler of Israel said to her, 'What is the trouble with you?' She answered, 'This woman said to me, "Give your son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow!" So we cooked my son and ate him, and I said to her on the next day, "Give your son that we may eat him!"; but she has hidden her son.'

When the ruler of Israel heard the words of the woman, he tore his clothes; and as he was passing by on the wall, the people looked and saw that he wore sackcloth next to his skin.

Now Elisha was sitting in his house with the elders beside him; and while he was still talking with them, the ruler of Israel came down to him and said, 'See, this is the calamity that comes from Jehovah! Why should I put my hope in Jehovah any longer?' But Elisha said, 'Hear the word of Jehovah, for he says, "To-morrow about this time a peck of fine meal shall be sold for a piece of silver and two pecks of barley for a piece of silver in the gate of Samaria."' Then the charioteer on whose arm the ruler of Israel leaned answered the man of God, 'If Jehovah himself should make windows in heaven, could this be possible?' He said, 'You shall see it with your own eyes.'

Now there were four lepers just outside the gate; and they said one to another, 'Why do we sit here until we die? If we say, "We will enter the city," then, since there is famine in the city, we shall die there; but if we sit here, we shall die too. Now come, let us go over to the army of the Arameans. If they spare our lives we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.'

So they set out at twilight to go over to the camp of the Arameans. But when they came to the edge of the camp of the Arameans no one was there, for the Lord had made the army of the Arameans hear a noise of chariots and of horses and of a great army, and they said to one another, 'Surely the ruler of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us.' So they rose and fled in the twilight; and they left their tents, their horses and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their lives. When these lepers came to the edge of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank and carried away silver and gold and clothing and hid them. Then they came back and entered another tent and carried away what was in it and went and hid that.

Then they said to one another, 'We are not doing right; this day is a day of good news. If we keep still and wait until daybreak punishment will overtake us. Now come, let us go and inform those in the palace.' So they called the watchmen at the city gate and said to them, 'We went to the camp of the Arameans, but there was no one there and no sound of human voice; the horses and asses were tied and the tents were just as they had been.'

The watchmen at the city gate shouted this news to those in the palace. And the ruler of Israel rose in

the night and said to his servants, 'I will now tell you what the Arameans have done: they know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, thinking, "When they come out of the city, we will capture them alive and so get into the city."'

But one of his servants spoke up and said, 'Let some men take a pair of the horses which are left here. If they die, they will be like the majority of the Israelites who are dying! Let us send and find out.' So they took two mounted men, and the ruler of Israel sent them after the army of the Arameans with the command, 'Go and see.' They followed them to the Jordan; and all the way was filled with clothes and weapons which the Arameans had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the ruler of Israel.

Then the people went and plundered the camp of the Arameans. So a peck of fine meal was sold for a piece of silver, and two pecks of barley for a piece of silver, just as Jehovah had said.

THE BLOODY STRUGGLE WITH TYRANNY AND HEATHENISM

117. The Overthrow of the House of Ahab

Elisha the prophet called one of the followers of the prophets and said to him, 'Tighten your belt, take this flask of oil in your hand and go to Ramoth in Gilead. When you arrive there, look for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and when you go in take him into an inner room away from those who are with him. Then from the flask pour oil on his head, and say, "Jehovah declares, I have anointed you to rule over Israel." Then open the door and flee without delay.'

So the young man went to Ramoth in Gilead; and when he arrived, the officers of the army were sitting together. And he said, 'Commander, I have a message for you.' Jehu said, 'To which of us?' He replied, 'To you, O commander.' Then Jehu rose and went into the house; and the young man poured the oil on his head and said to him, 'Jehovah the God of Israel declares, "I have anointed you to rule over Jehovah's people, over Israel!"' Then he opened the door and fled.

When Jehu came out to the servants of his master, they asked him, 'Is all well? Why did this insane fellow come to you?' He answered, 'You know the man and his message.' But they said, 'You are deceiving us. You must tell us.' Jehu replied, 'He said this to me: "Jehovah declares, I have anointed you to rule over Israel."' Then each quickly took his garment, laid it at his feet on the bare stairs, and blew the horn and cried, 'Jehu is the ruler of Israel.' So Jehu the

son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi formed a conspiracy against Joram.

Now Joram, with all the Israelites, had been defending Ramoth in Gilead against Hazael king of Aram, but he had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Arameans had inflicted when he fought with Hazael king of Aram. So Jehu said, 'If it is your will, let no one escape from the city to bring news to Jezreel.' Then Jehu mounted his chariot and went toward Jezreel.

While the watchman was standing on the tower of Jezreel, he saw the cloud of dust about Jehu, as he came, and said, 'I see a cloud of dust.' Joram said, 'Send a horseman to meet him and inquire whether he comes with peaceful intent.' So the horseman went out to meet him and said, 'The ruler of Israel inquires, "Do you come with peaceful intent?"' Jehu replied, 'What have you to do with peace? Turn and follow me.' So the watchman reported, 'The messenger went to them, but does not return.' Then Joram sent out a second horseman who went to them and said, 'The ruler of Israel inquires, "Do you come with peaceful intent?"' Jehu answered, 'What have you to do with peace? Turn and follow me.' So the watchman reported, 'He also went to them but does not return; however, the driving is like the driving of Jehu, for he drives furiously.'

Then Joram said, 'Get my chariot ready,' and when it was ready he went to meet Jehu and found him in the field of Naboth the Jezreelite. When Joram saw Jehu, he said, 'Do you come with peaceful intent, Jehu?' Then Joram turned to flee, but Jehu drew his bow and struck Joram between the shoulders, so that the arrow went through his heart, and he sank down in his chariot.

Then Jehu said to Bidkar his charioteer, 'Take him up and throw him into the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, for I well remember that, as you and I rode together after Ahab his father, Jehovah pronounced this sentence upon him: "Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and his sons, and I will requite you on this same piece of land." So throw him into this piece of land, as Jehovah said.'

Then Jehu arrived at Jezreel. As soon as Jezebel heard of it, she painted her eyes, attired her head, and looked out of the window. As Jehu came in at the gate she said, 'Is all well with you, you traitor, you murderer of your master?' But he looked up to the window and cried, 'Who is on my side? who?' Two or three court attendants looked down at him, and he said, 'Throw her down.' And they threw her down and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled on her. When he had gone in and had had something to eat and drink, he gave this command, 'Look after this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter.' But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull, the feet, and the hands. When they went back and told Jehu he said, 'This is what Jehovah declared by his servant Elijah when he said, "On the piece of land at Jezreel the dogs shall eat Jezebel's flesh, and her body shall be as refuse on the surface of the field, so that no one can say, This is Jezebel."'

118. The Overthrow of Tyranny and Heathenism in Judah

In the twelfth year of Joram's rule over Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram began to rule over Judah. And he went down to Jezreel to visit Joram, who was

ill. When Jehu struck down Joram, Ahaziah saw it and fled in the direction of Beth-gannim. But Jehu pursued after him with the words, 'Shoot him down too in the chariot.' So they shot him down in the ascent to Gur, near Ibleam, but he escaped to Megiddo and died there.

When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah learned that her son was dead, she rose and put to death all the ruling family except Jehoash, whom his aunt, Jehosheba, secretly took from among Ahaziah's sons who were to be put to death, and placed with his nurse in the bedchamber. In this way she hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not put to death. He was with her, hid in the temple of Jehovah, six years, while Athaliah ruled over the land.

But in the seventh year Jehoiada the priest called together the officers of the royal guard and brought them in to the temple of Jehovah. After making a solemn agreement and taking an oath from them, he showed them Ahaziah's son, and gave them these orders, 'This is what you shall do: a third part of you who go in on the Sabbath to guard the palace shall keep watch over it. Two divisions of you, including all who go out on the Sabbath to guard the temple of Jehovah, shall surround Jehoash, each with his weapons in his hand. And let whoever comes within the ranks be put to death. Thus you shall guard Jehoash, when he goes out and when he comes in.'

The officers did as Jehoiada the priest commanded. And he brought out Ahaziah's son and put the crown and the royal insignia upon him; and they proclaimed him ruler over Judah and anointed him and clapped their hands, crying, 'Long live the ruler!'

But when Athaliah heard the people shouting, she came to them in the temple of Jehovah. When she

saw Jehoash standing by the pillar, as was the custom, and the officers and the trumpeters by him, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, she tore her clothes and cried, 'Treason! Treason!' But Jehoiada the priest gave this order to the officers: 'Bring her out between the ranks, and kill with the sword whoever follows her,' for the priest said, 'Let her not be put to death in the temple of Jehovah.' So they seized her, and she was killed as she went through the horses' entry to the palace.

Jehoiada made a solemn compact between Jehovah and the new ruler and the people, that they should be Jehovah's people; also between the ruler and the people. And all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and destroyed it. They also broke his altar and his images completely in pieces, and they slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altar, and Jehoiada appointed officers to take charge of the temple of Jehovah.

119. Elisha's Farewell Message

When Jehu died he was buried in Samaria, and Jehoahaz his son succeeded him. But he displeased Jehovah, so that the anger of Jehovah was aroused against Israel and he let them be continually subject to Hazael king of Aram and to Benhadad the son of Hazael. Then Jehoahaz prayed earnestly to Jehovah, and Jehovah listened to his petition, for he saw how the king of Aram oppressed Israel. Therefore Jehovah gave the Israelites a savior, so that they escaped from the power of the Arameans and could dwell in their homes as formerly. But he left to Jehoahaz not more than fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand infantry; for the king of Aram had destroyed them and made them like the dust in the threshing.

Then Jehoahaz died and was buried in Samaria, and Joash his son succeeded him.

Now when Elisha fell sick of the disease of which he died, Joash the ruler of Israel came down to weep over him and said, 'My father, my father! the chariots and horsemen of Israel!' But Elisha said to him, 'Take a bow and arrows.' So he took a bow and arrows. Then Elisha said to him, 'Place your hand upon the bow.' When he placed his hand on the bow, Elisha placed his hands upon Joash's hands. Then he said, 'Open the window toward the east'; and when he had opened it, Elisha said, 'Shoot'; and he shot. And Elisha said, 'Jehovah's arrow of victory, even the arrow of victory over the Arameans; for you shall strike down the Arameans in Aphek until you have destroyed them.' Then he said, 'Take arrows.' And when he had taken them, he said to the ruler of Israel, 'Strike on the ground'; and he struck three times and then stopped. The man of God was angry with him and said, 'You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck down the Arameans until you had destroyed them, but as it is, you will defeat the Arameans but three times.' Then Elisha died and they buried him.

But Joash recaptured from Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities which he had taken in war from his father Jehoahaz. Three times Joash defeated Benhadad and thus recovered the cities of Israel.

120. The Decline and Fall of Northern Israel

When Joash the ruler of Israel died and was buried in Samaria with the rulers of Israel, his son Jeroboam succeeded him. He restored the boundary line of Israel from the entrance into Hamath to the Dead Sea, as Jehovah the God of Israel had declared through his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who lived at Gath-hepher.

When Jeroboam the ruler of Israel died and was buried, his son Zechariah succeeded him. But Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and put him to death in Ibleam, and for one month ruled in his place at Samaria. Then Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah and entered Samaria and put Shallum to death; and he ruled ten years in Samaria.

While he ruled, Pul [Tiglath-pileser], the king of Assyria, invaded the land. But Menahem gave Pul a hundred pounds of silver, that he might help him to maintain his rule. And Menahem exacted from each wealthy Israelite fifty pieces of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back and did not remain.

When Menahem died his son Pekahiah succeeded him; but his commander, Pekah the son of Remaliah, conspired against him and assassinated him in Samaria in the castle of the palace, and Pekah ruled twenty years.

While Pekah ruled, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, and all the terri-

tory of Naphtali, and took their inhabitants captive to Assyria.

Then Hoshea the son of Elah formed a conspiracy against Pekah and put him to death and succeeded him; and he ruled nine years.

But Shalmaneser king of Assyria came against him, and Hoshea became subject to Shalmaneser and paid him tribute. But when the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea had formed a conspiracy, for he had sent messengers to Sewe king of Egypt and paid no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done each year before, the king of Assyria imprisoned him.

It was in the seventh year of Hoshea's rule that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came and besieged Samaria. At the end of three years, in the ninth year of Hoshea's rule, Samaria was captured by the Assyrians; and the king of Assyria carried the Israelites away captive and placed them in Halah and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cutha, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria to take the place of the Israelites. And they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities.

121. Judah's Troubled History

In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam's rule over Israel, Uzziah the son of Amaziah began to rule over Judah, and he ruled forty-two years in Jerusalem.

And Jehovah afflicted Uzziah, so that he was a leper to the day of his death; but he lived in his own house without restraint, while his son Jotham ruled the people of the land at the palace.

In the seventeenth year of Pekah's rule Ahaz the

twenty-year-old son of Jotham became the ruler of Judah; and he ruled sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do that which pleased Jehovah his God, as did his ancestor David, but followed the policy of the rulers of Israel. In keeping with the abominated custom of the nations which Jehovah drove out before the Israelites, he made his son pass through fire. He also burnt sacrificial offerings at the old shrines on the heights and on the hills and under every green tree.

Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah came up to attack Jerusalem; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not conquer him. At that time the king of Edom drove the Judahites from Elath and reconquered it for the Edomites; and they have remained there until the present day.

But Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, 'I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the power of the king of Aram and from the power of the ruler of Israel, who have attacked me.'

Then Ahaz took the silver and gold that were found in the temple of Jehovah and in the treasuries of the royal palace, and sent them as a present to the king of Assyria. The king of Assyria listened to his petitions and went up against Damascus and captured it, put Rezin to death, and carried the inhabitants away captive to Kir.

Now when Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, he saw there the altar that was at Damascus, and he sent a model of the altar and a pattern giving all the details of its construction to Urijah the priest. And Urijah built an altar exactly corresponding to the model that Ahaz sent from Damascus. When Ahaz returned from Damascus and saw it, he went up to the altar and offered his burnt-offering

and his cereal-offering, and poured out his libation, and sprinkled the blood of the fellowship offering upon the altar. The bronze altar, which stood in front of the temple, between it and his altar, he transferred to the north side of his altar, to win the favor of the king of Assyria.

When Ahaz died and was buried with ancestors in the City of David, Hezekiah his son succeeded him.

122. The Two Great Crises in the Days of Hezekiah

In the third year of the rule of Hoshea of Israel, Hezekiah began to rule in Judah. He was twenty-five years old when he began to rule, and he ruled twenty-nine years in Jerusalem.

Hezekiah drove the Philistines back to Gaza and conquered their territory from the watch-tower to that fortified city. But in the fourteenth year of his rule, Sennacherib king of Assyria advanced against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. Hezekiah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: 'I have done wrong; withdraw from me; whatever terms you impose upon me I will accept.' So the king of Assyria made Hezekiah pay thirty thousand pounds of silver and thirty thousand pounds of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of Jehovah and in the treasures of the royal palace.

Then Hezekiah placed the old Canaanite shrines under a ban, broke in pieces the sacred pillars, and cut down the heathen idols. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for up to that time the Israelites had offered sacrifices to it.

Later the king of Assyria sent the commander-in-

chief, and the chief of the court attendants, and a high official from Lachish with a great army to Hezekiah at Jerusalem. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they stopped by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the way to the fuller's field. And when they called for the ruler of Judah, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was prefect of the palace, and Shebnah the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the chancellor went out to them. Then the high official said to them, 'Say now to Hezekiah, "The great king, the king of Assyria, declares: What is the basis of this confidence which you cherish? You think, a simple word of the lips is counsel and strength enough for war! On whom do you trust, that you have rebelled against me?"' But the people were silent and made no answer, for Hezekiah's command was, 'Do not answer him.'

Then the prefect of the palace, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebnah the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the chancellor went to Hezekiah with torn clothes and told him the words of the high official. As soon as Hezekiah heard the report, he too tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the temple of Jehovah. He also sent Eliakim, and Shebnah, and the oldest of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. They said to him, 'Hezekiah declares, "This is a day of trouble and discipline and shame; for children are ready to be born but there is not strength enough to bring them into the world. It may be Jehovah your God will hear and administer a reproof for all the words of the high official, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to defy the living God. Therefore pray earnestly for all who are left in Judah."'

When the servants of Hezekiah came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, 'Take this answer back to your

master: "Jehovah declares, Do not be afraid of the words that you have heard and with which the servants of the king of Assyria have insulted me. I will put a spirit in him, so that he will hear a rumor that will make him return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall there by the sword."'

That very night the angel of Jehovah went and struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the Assyrians. When men rose the next morning they discovered all the dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria returned home and lived at Nineveh. While he was worshipping in the temple of Nisroch his god, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer struck him down with the sword. They escaped into the land of Ararat, and his son Esarhaddon became king in his place.

123. The Heathen Reaction Under Manasseh

When Hezekiah died, Manasseh his twelve-year-old son succeeded him, and he ruled fifty-five years in Jerusalem; but he did that which displeased Jehovah, adopting the abominable practices of the nations whom Jehovah drove out before the Israelites. For he built again on the heights the shrines which Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he erected altars for Baal and made an image of the Canaanite goddess of fortune, as Ahab the ruler of Israel had done, and worshipped the sun and moon and planets, as did the Babylonians, and served them. He built altars in the temple of Jehovah, of which Jehovah said, 'With Jerusalem will I let my name be associated.' He also built altars for all the Babylonian star gods in the two courts of the temple of Jehovah. And he made his son pass through the fire and practised augury and witchcraft

and appointed mediums and diviners; he did much evil in the sight of Jehovah which aroused anger.

Therefore Jehovah said through his servants the prophets, 'Because Manasseh the ruler of Judah has done these abominable acts and has behaved more wickedly than all the Amorites who preceded him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols, Jehovah the God of Israel will bring such evil on Jerusalem and Judah, that the ears of whoever hears of it shall tingle. And I will stretch the measuring line over Jerusalem, as I did over Samaria, and the plummet to reveal its guilt, as I did over the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem clean of all inhabitants as one wipes a dish, wiping and turning it upside down.'

Manasseh also shed the blood of many innocent men, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other with deeds of bloodshed. When he died, he was buried in the garden of his palace in the garden of Uzza, and his son Amnon succeeded him.

Amnon ruled two years in Jerusalem and, like Manasseh his father, did not do what was right in the sight of Jehovah. Then the servants of Amnon conspired against him and put him to death in his palace. But the people of the land killed all who had conspired against him, and they elected his son Josiah ruler in his place.

124. The Discovery and Promulgation of the Laws in Deuteronomy

Josiah was eight years old when he began to rule, and he ruled thirty-one years in Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of his rule he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and grandson of Meshullam the scribe, to the temple of Jehovah with the command, 'Go up to Hilkiah the chief priest and see that, when he has taken the money that is brought into the temple of Jehovah and that which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people, they deliver it into the hands of the workmen who have the supervision of the temple of Jehovah. Then let them give it to the carpenters, the builders, and the masons who are in the temple of Jehovah, to repair the breaches in it and to buy timber and hewn-stone to restore it.' But no reckoning was required of them for the money that was delivered into their hands, for they dealt honestly.

Then Hilkiah the chief priest said to Shaphan the scribe, 'I have found the book of the law in the temple of Jehovah.' And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. Then Shaphan went to Josiah and told him, 'Your servants have taken the money that was found in the temple and have turned it over to the workmen who have the oversight of the temple of Jehovah.' Shaphan the scribe also said to Josiah, 'Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.' And Shaphan read it before him.

When Josiah had heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. Then he gave this command

to Hilkiah the priest, to Ahikam the son of Shaphan, to Achbor the son of Micaiah, to Shaphan the scribe, and to Asaiah his servant, 'Go, inquire of Jehovah for me and for the people and for all Judah about the words of this book that has been found; for Jehovah must be exceedingly angry with us, because our fathers have not heeded the words of this book nor put in practice all that is there prescribed for us.'

So Hilkiah the priest and Ahikam and Achbor went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the keeper of the royal wardrobe, who lived in Jerusalem in the second quarter, and talked with her. She said to them, 'This is the message of Jehovah, the God of Israel: "Tell the man who sent you to me, Jehovah declares, I am now about to bring calamity upon this place and upon its inhabitants, even all the threats contained in the book which the ruler of Judah has read." But you shall say to him who sent you to inquire of Jehovah, "Jehovah the God of Israel declares, As regards the words which you have heard—because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before Jehovah and have wept before me, I also have heard you, Jehovah declares."' So they brought back word to Josiah.

Then at his command they assembled all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And Josiah went up to the temple of Jehovah, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as well as the priests and the prophets and all the people, including the children; and he read to them all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the temple of Jehovah. And Josiah stood by the pillar and made a solemn promise before Jehovah to obey all the commands and carry out the regulations contained in *this book*. And all the people ratified the agreement.

125. Josiah's Drastic Reformation

Then Josiah commanded Hilkiah the chief priest and the second priest and the door-keepers to bring out from the temple of Jehovah all the utensils that were made for Baal and for the Canaanite goddess of fortune, and for the Babylonian star gods; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the lime-kilns by the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. He also deposed the idolatrous priests, whom the rulers of Judah had appointed to offer sacrifice at the shrines on the heights in the towns of Judah and in the places about Jerusalem; those also who offered sacrifices to Baal, to the sun, the moon, and the planets, and all the starry host. He brought the image of the Canaanite goddess of fortune from the temple of Jehovah to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, and there burned it, beat it to dust, and cast its dust upon the graves of the common people.

He also broke down the houses of the temple prostitutes who were in the temple of Jehovah, where the women wove tunics for the Canaanite goddess of fortune. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah and from Geba to Beersheba and defiled the shrines on the heights, where the priests had offered sacrifices; and he broke down the heathen shrines which were on the left at the entrance of the city gate and stood before the gate of Joshua the governor of the city. He also defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. He removed the horses at the entrance of the temple of Jehovah, which the rulers of Judah had dedicated to the sun, and burned the chariots of the sun. Josiah broke down and crushed in pieces the altars that were

on the roof, which the rulers of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had set up in the two courts of the temple of Jehovah, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.

Josiah also tore down the altar and the ancient shrine at Bethel, broke its stones in pieces, and beat it to dust, and burned the image of the Canaanite goddess of fortune. Then he gave this command to all the people: 'Celebrate the passover to Jehovah your God, as is prescribed in this book of the covenant.' Such a passover as this had not been celebrated from the days of the judges who ruled Israel and during the period of the rulers of Israel and of Judah; but this passover was celebrated in Jehovah's honor in Jerusalem for the first time in the eighteenth year of Josiah's rule.

Josiah put away the mediums, the diviners, the idols, and all the abominations that were discovered in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might enforce the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the temple of Jehovah. Josiah was the first ruler who turned to Jehovah with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength in exact accord with the law of Moses, nor was any of his successors like him.

126. The Rapid Decline of the Southern State

While Josiah ruled, Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt made an expedition to the River Euphrates against the king of Assyria. Josiah went out against him, but as soon as Pharaoh-necho saw him he killed him at Megiddo. Josiah's servants carried away his corpse in a chariot from Megiddo, brought it to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb.

Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and anointed him and made him ruler in place of his father. But Pharaoh-necho imprisoned him at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not rule in Jerusalem, and imposed on the land a tribute of ten thousand pounds of silver and one hundred of gold. And Pharaoh-necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah ruler in place of Josiah his father and changed his name to Jehoiakim. He then removed Jehoahaz to Egypt, where he died. Jehoiakim paid the silver and the gold to Pharaoh, but he had to tax the land to give the money demanded by Pharaoh.

During the rule of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim was subject to him for three years. And the king of Egypt came no more out of his land, but the king of Babylon took all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates. Then Jehoiakim rebelled against him; and Jehovah sent against Jehoiakim guerilla bands of the Chaldeans, of the Arameans, of the Moabites, and of the Ammonites. When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin succeeded him; but he ruled in Jerusalem only three months, for at that time the soldiers of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem and besieged the city. And Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came to the city, while his soldiers were besieging it; and Jehoiachin the ruler of Judah, together with his mother, and his servants, his officers, and his court attendants, surrendered to the king of Babylon.

Then the king of Babylon carried away all the treasures of the temple of Jehovah and the treasures of the royal palace and broke in pieces all the vessels of gold *which Solomon* the ruler of Israel had made for the *temple of Jehovah*, as Jehovah had directed. He also

took captive the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all the officers and the warriors, ten thousand in all, and all the craftsmen and the smiths; none remained except the poorest people of the land. Jehoiachin and his mother, his wives, his court attendants, and the chief men of the land, Nebuchadrezzar carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. He also took captive to Babylon all the men who could carry arms, to the number of seven thousand, and a thousand of the craftsmen and the smiths, all who were capable of carrying on war.

Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, ruler in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

127. The Final Destruction of Jerusalem

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon, and in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came with all his army and besieged Jerusalem; and they erected a siege wall about it. So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of Zedekiah's rule.

On the ninth day of the fourth month of the siege, when the famine was so severe in the city that there was no bread for the common people, a breach was made in the city wall, and Zedekiah and all the soldiers fled by night through the gate between the two walls, near the king's garden, and went in the direction of the Dead Sea. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued Zedekiah and overtook him on the plains of Jericho, after all his army had scattered and left him. They captured him and took him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed judgment upon him. And they killed the sons of Zedekiah in his presence and

put out his eyes and carried him, bound in chains, to Babylon.

On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of the reign of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the commander of the body-guard, an officer of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burnt the temple of Jehovah and the royal palace and all the houses in Jerusalem, including every large house. And all the troops of the Chaldeans who were with the commander of the body-guard tore down the walls around Jerusalem.

Nebuzaradan the commander of the body-guard carried away captive the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had gone over to the king of Babylon. But some of the poorest of the land he left to take care of the vineyards and farms.

In the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin the ruler of Judah, on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he mounted the throne released Jehoiachin from prison and gave him a position of honor. He also spoke kindly to him and placed his seat above the seats of the kings with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes and, as long as he lived, ate at the royal table; and for his support a daily allowance was continually given him by the king.

DANIEL

THE STEADFASTNESS AND THE DIVINE PROTECTION OF THE EXILES

128. The Courage of Four Jewish Captives

Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon commanded Ashpenaz, the chief of his court attendants, to bring in certain of the Israelites and some of the descendants of the royal line and of the nobles, youths in whom there was no physical defect, but who were attractive in appearance, learned in all wisdom, intelligent, able to acquire knowledge, and capable of serving in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and the language of the Chaldeans. And the king assigned to them for each day a portion of his delicacies and of the wine which he drank and directed that they should be educated three years and that at the end of that time they should enter the royal service.

Among these youths were the Judahites: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; but the chief of the court attendants gave other names to them. To Daniel he gave the name Belteshazzar, and to Hananiah, Shadrach, and to Mishael, Meshach, and to Azariah, Abednego.

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the king's delicacies nor with the wine which he drank, so he requested the chief of the court attendants not to compel him to defile himself; and God enabled Daniel to win the kindness and consideration of the chief of the court attendants.

But the chief of the court attendants said to Daniel, 'I fear that my lord the king who has assigned your

food and your drink will see that your faces are more dejected than those of youths who are of the same age, and that you will endanger my head with the king.'

Daniel said to the guardian whom the chief of the court attendants had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 'Test your servants ten days; and let us have vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the youths who eat of the king's delicacies, and act accordingly.' So he complied with their request and tested them ten days. At the end of ten days their appearance was better and they were fatter than all the youths who ate of the king's delicacies. So the guardian took away their delicacies and the wine provided for them and gave them vegetables.

To these four youths God gave knowledge, familiarity with all kinds of literature, and wisdom; and Daniel understood all kinds of visions and dreams.

At the end of the period which the king had fixed for bringing them in, the chief of the court attendants presented them to Nebuchadrezzar, and the king spoke with them. But not one of all the youths was found equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; so they entered the service of the king. In every subject which called for wisdom and insight and about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times superior to all the magicians and conjurers who were in his entire realm. So Daniel lived on even to the first year of King Cyrus.

129. Daniel's Interpretation of Nebuchadrezzar's Dream

Nebuchadrezzar in the second year of his reign had *dreams, and his* mind was so troubled that he could

not sleep. Then the king sent for the magicians and the conjurers and the sorcerers and the astrologers to interpret his dreams to him. So they came in before the king, and he said to them, 'I have had a dream and my mind is troubled, for I want to know the meaning of the dream.'

Then the astrologers said to the king: 'O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants and we will give the interpretation.' The king answered, 'What I now say is certain: if you do not tell me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb and your houses shall be made refuse heaps. But if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honors; therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.' They answered the second time, 'Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will interpret it.' The king replied, 'I clearly perceive that you wish to gain time, for you know that what I have said is certain, and that if you do not tell the dream to me, the same sentence awaits you all; so you have planned to speak lying and false words before me, until the time of its fulfilment has passed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give its interpretation.' The Chaldeans answered the king, 'There is no man on earth who can give what the king asks, for no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked such a thing of any magician, conjurer, or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult, and there is no one else who can tell it to the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with men.' For this cause the king was angry and very furious and ordered all the wise men of Babylon put to death.

So the decree went forth that the wise men were to be put to death, and search was made for Daniel and

his companions that they too might be put to death. Then Daniel spoke with counsel and prudence to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, who had gone forth to put the wise men of Babylon to death, and said, 'Why is the king's decree so harsh?' When Arioch told Daniel the facts, he went to the king and asked that he grant him time to give the interpretation.

Then Daniel went to his house and told the facts to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might ask mercy from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night, and he praised the God of heaven and said,

Blessed be the name of God
From everlasting to everlasting!
For wisdom and might are his.
He changes the times and the seasons,
He removes and sets up kings,
He gives wisdom to the wise,
And knowledge to those who have insight.
He reveals the deep, secret things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
And the light of truth dwells in him.
I give thee thanks and praise,
For thou givest me wisdom and might,
And hast made known the things we desired;
Thou hast made known to us the king's secret!

Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had ordered to destroy the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, 'Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon. *Take me to the* king, and I will give him the interpretation.'

Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel to the king and said to him, 'I have found a man among the captives from Judah who will give the king the interpretation.' The king said to Daniel (whose name was Belteshazzar), 'Can you make known to me the dream which I have had and its interpretation?' Daniel answered, 'The secret which the king demands is something that neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, nor astrologers can declare to him: but there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and he has made known to King Nebuchadrezzar what shall be in the future. Your dream and the visions which you had as you lay asleep are these: You, O king, had a vision and saw a great statue. That statue was immense and its brightness was extraordinary, as it stood before you, and its appearance was terrible. The head of the statue was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its body and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron and part of clay. You gazed until a stone was cut out, not by human hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were all broken in pieces and became like the chaff which blows from the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away so that not a trace was left of them. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the earth.

'This is the dream, and we will tell its interpretation before the king: O king, you are the king of kings to whom God has given the rule, the power, the might, and the glory; and throughout the habitable world he has given into your control mankind, the wild beasts and birds and has appointed you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

'After you shall rise another kingdom inferior to

you, and a third kingdom of brass, which shall rule over the whole earth. A fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, for iron breaks in pieces and shatters all things, and like iron which crushes, it shall break in pieces and crush all things. And as you saw the feet and toes, part potter's clay and part iron, it shall be a divided kingdom: but there shall be in it some of the strength of the iron, for you saw the iron mixed with clay. As the toes of the feet were part iron and part clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. You saw the iron mixed with clay, for the rulers will intermarry, but they will not stick together, even as iron does not unite with clay.

'During the reigns of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the dominion be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and destroy all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. This is indicated by the fact that you saw a stone cut out of the mountain, but not with human hands; and it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold.

'The great God has made known to the king the future, and the dream is genuine and its interpretation true.'

Then King Nebuchadrezzar fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel and ordered that a sacrifice and sweet odors should be offered to him. The king also said to Daniel, 'Your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of secrets, for you have been able to disclose this great secret.' Then the king gave Daniel a high position and many costly gifts, and appointed him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and chief director of all the wise men in *Babylon*. And at Daniel's request the king placed *Shadrach*, Meshach, and Abednego in charge of the

administration of the province of Babylon; but Daniel remained in the king's court.

130. The Deliverance of Daniel's Faithful Friends

Nebuchadrezzar the king made a statue of gold ninety feet high and nine feet wide. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon, and sent for the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces. So they all gathered together and stood before the statue that Nebuchadrezzar had set up.

Then the herald cried aloud, 'To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations: "The moment you hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, lute, harp, bag-pipe, and all kinds of musical instruments, you shall fall down and worship the golden statue, and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."' So, when all the people heard the sound of the trumpet, flute, lute, harp, bag-pipe, and all kinds of musical instruments, all the peoples, nations, and races fell down and worshipped the golden statue that King Nebuchadrezzar had set up.

But at that time certain Chaldeans approached the king and made this accusation against the Jews: 'O king, live forever! O king, you have decreed that every man who hears the sound of the trumpet, flute, lute, bag-pipe, and all kinds of musical instruments shall fall down and worship the golden statue, and that whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. *There are certain* Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-

nego, whom you have placed in charge of the administration of the province of Babylon; these men, O king, have not listened to your command; they do not serve your gods nor worship the golden statue which you have set up.'

Then Nebuchadrezzar in his rage and fury gave command to lead in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When they were led before the king, Nebuchadrezzar said to them, 'Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my god nor worship the golden statue which I have set up? If you are now ready, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, lute, harp, psaltery, and bag-pipe, and all kinds of musical instruments, to fall down and worship the statue which I have made, well; but if you do not worship, you shall at once be thrown into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and where is there a god who can deliver you out of my hands?' Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, 'O king, there is no need of our answering you on this point. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, know, O king, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden statue which you have set up.'

Then Nebuchadrezzar was furious and the expression of his face changed, as he looked at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than ordinarily. He also commanded certain strong men who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and throw them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their cloaks, *their tunics*, their robes, and their other garments, and *were thrown into* the midst of the burning fiery fur-

nace. Since the king's command was urgent and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flames destroyed the men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then Nebuchadrezzar the king was astonished and rose up hastily and said to his counsellors, 'Did we not throw three men bound into the midst of the fire?' They answered, 'True, O king.' He said, 'Now I see four men unbound walking in the midst of the fire, and they are unhurt, and the fourth looks like an angel.'

Then Nebuchadrezzar went near the door of the burning fiery furnace and said, 'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out here.' Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the midst of the fire. And the assembled satraps, prefects, governors, and counsellors saw that the fire had no power over the bodies of these men, and that the hair of their heads was not singed and that their cloaks were not harmed, and that there was no smell of fire. And Nebuchadrezzar said, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel to deliver his servants who trusted in him and refused to obey the king's command and have offered their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own. Therefore I decree that every people, nation, and race that shall say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces and their house shall be made a refuse heap, for there is no other god who is so able to deliver as is this one.' Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the *province of Babylon*.

131. The Handwriting on the Wall

Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine before them all. Under the influence of wine, he gave command to bring the gold and silver utensils which his father Nebuchadrezzar had taken from the temple at Jerusalem, that the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. So they brought the golden vessels which were taken from the temple of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

At that moment the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the palm of the hand that wrote.

Then the king grew pale, and his thoughts troubled him, and the joints of his back were relaxed and his knees knocked together. The king called for the conjurers, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers and said to the wise men of Babylon, 'Whoever shall read this writing and explain its meaning shall be clothed in purple and have a chain of gold about his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.' Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing nor interpret its meaning to the king. So King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, and his appearance was altered, and his nobles were thrown into confusion.

Now the queen, because of what the king and his nobles had said, came into the banquet house and said, '*O king,* live forever; let not your thoughts trouble *you nor let* your appearance be altered. There is a *man in your* kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy

gods, and in the days of your father he was found to have light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods. Now let Daniel be called, and he will explain the meaning.'

So Daniel was brought in before the king, and the king said to him, 'Are you that Daniel, one of the men who were carried away captive, whom the king my father brought from Judah? I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you possess insight and understanding and extraordinary wisdom. The wise men and the conjurers have been brought in before me to read this writing and to interpret its meaning; but they are unable. I have heard that you can give interpretations and answer difficult questions. Now if you can read the writing and interpret its meaning, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold about your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.'

Then Daniel answered the king, 'Keep your gifts and give your rewards to another; without them I will read the writing to the king and interpret its meaning. O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadrezzar your father the kingdom and power and glory and majesty. Because of the power that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and races trembled and feared him. He killed or kept alive as he wished; and he raised up or put down whoever he pleased. But when he was filled with pride and became arrogant, he was deposed from his kingly throne and his glory was taken from him, and he was driven away from men, and his mind became like that of the beasts, and he lived with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he learned that the Most High God rules over the kingdom of men and that he sets up over it whomever he will.

'But you, his son, O Belshazzar, have not been humble

ble, though you knew all this, but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven, and have had the utensils of his temple brought before you, and you and your nobles, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them; and you have given praise to the gods of silver, of gold, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone, which cannot see nor hear nor know; and you have not praised the God in whose control are your very breath and all that you do.'

'Then the hand was sent out before him and traced this writing:

MENE, TEKEL, PERES

'This is its meaning: Mene: God has numbered your kingdom and brought it to an end. Tekel: you are weighed in the balances and found wanting. Peres. your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.'

Then at Belshazzar's command Daniel was clothed with purple and a chain of gold was put about his neck and he was proclaimed the third ruler in the kingdom. But on that very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed, and Darius the Mede received the kingdom.

132. Daniel's Escape from the Lions

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps who ruled throughout the whole kingdom, and over them three chief officials, of whom Daniel was one, that these satraps might report to them and that the king should suffer no loss. This Daniel surpassed the other chief officials and the satraps because he had an excellent spirit; and the king intended to set him over the entire empire.

Then the chief officials and the satraps sought to find an occasion to accuse Daniel because of his admin-

istration; but they could find no occasion nor fault, for he was faithful and was not guilty of any error or wrong-doing.

Then these men said, 'We shall find no occasion to accuse this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.' So these chief officials and satraps came tumultuously to the king, and said to him, 'King Darius, live forever. All the chief officials of the kingdom, the counsellors and the satraps, the judges and the governors, have consulted together to have the king establish a statute and to make a strong interdict, that whoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, except of you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions. Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the decree that, like the law of the Medes and Persians which is unalterable, it may not be changed.' So King Darius signed the decree and the interdict.

When Daniel knew that the decree was signed he went into his house—now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem—and he knelt upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he had formerly. Then these men rushed in and found Daniel praying and invoking his God. So they went before the king and spoke to him about the royal interdict: 'Have you not signed an interdict, that every man who shall ask a petition of any man or god within thirty days, except of you, O king, shall be thrown into the den of lions?' The king answered, 'The ruling is fixed according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which is unalterable.' Then they went on to say to the king, 'That Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, nor to the interdict that you have signed, but prays three times a day.'

When the king heard these words, he was greatly

disturbed, and set his heart on delivering Daniel, and he labored until the sun set to save him. Then these men came tumultuously to the king and said to him, 'Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians, that no interdict nor statute which the king establishes may be changed.'

So the king gave his command, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the den of lions. But the king said to Daniel, 'Your God, whom you serve continually, will deliver you.' Then a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own seal ring and with those of his nobles, that no change might be made in order to rescue Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting.

At dawn, as soon as it was light, the king rose and hastened to the den of lions. When he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried with an agonized voice, 'O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?' Daniel said to the king, 'O king, live forever. My God has sent his angel and has closed the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me; for I was found innocent before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong.' Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and it was found that he had suffered no injury, for he had trusted in his God.

Then the king commanded that those men who had accused Daniel should be brought and thrown into the den of lions, together with their children and wives; and before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions broke all their bones.

ESTHER

A WOMAN'S LOYALTY TO HER RACE

133. The Follies of a Despot

Xerxes gave a feast for all his officials, officers, and courtiers in the third year of his reign. The commanders of the military forces of Persia and Media, the nobles and satraps were before him; while for one hundred and eighty days he showed them the glorious riches of his kingdom and the costliness of his magnificent regalia.

When these days were ended, the king made for all classes of people who were present in the royal palace at Susa a seven days' feast in the enclosed garden of the royal palace. There were white and violet cotton curtains fastened to silver rings and pillars of marble with cords of fine purple and linen. The couches were of gold and silver placed upon a mosaic pavement of alabaster, white marble, mother-of-pearl, and dark stone. The drink was brought in vessels of gold which were all different, and the king's wine was provided with royal liberality. The drinking was unrestricted, for the king had directed all the officers of his household to let each man do as he pleased. Vashti the queen also gave a feast for the women in the royal palace which belonged to King Xerxes.

On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was under the influence of wine, he commanded his seven court attendants to bring Vashti the queen before him with the royal turban on her head, to show the peoples and the officials her beauty, for she was very fair. But Queen Vashti refused to come as the king commanded

through the court attendants. Therefore the king was very angry.

In his rage the king said to the wise men who knew the precedents, 'According to law what should we do to Queen Vashti?' Memucan, one of the seven viziers, said before the king and the officials, 'Vashti the queen has done wrong not only to the king but also to all the officials and to all the peoples in all of the king's provinces. For the refusal of the queen will be reported to all the women with the result that it will make them despise their husbands, for they will say, "King Xerxes commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she did not come!" And this very day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the refusal of the queen will tell it to all the king's officials, and there will be contempt and strife! If it seems best to the king, let him send out a royal edict, and let it be written among the laws of Persia and Media, in order that it may not be repealed, that Vashti may never again come before King Xerxes; and let the king give her place as queen to another who is better than she. And when the king's decree which he makes shall be heard throughout his kingdom—great as it is—the wives of all classes will give honor to their husbands.'

The proposal pleased the king and the officials, and the king did as Memucan advised. So the king sent letters to all the provinces, to every province in its system of writing and to every race in its language, that every man should be master in his own house!

134. The Choice of a Queen

After these events, when the wrath of King Xerxes had subsided, he remembered what Vashti had done

and what had been decreed against her. Then the king's pages who waited upon him said, 'Let beautiful young girls be sought for the king, and let the king appoint commissioners to all the provinces of his kingdom to gather them all to Susa the royal residence; let them be brought into the women's quarters under the custody of Hegai, the royal court attendant, who has charge of the women. Then give them what is needed to make them beautiful, and let the girl who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.' The proposal pleased the king and he did so.

There was in Susa the royal residence a certain Jew named Mordecai, a descendant of Kish, a Benjamite who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the exiles who were deported with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon took captive. He had adopted Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The girl was shapely and beautiful; and after her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted her.

So when the king's command and decree were known, and when many girls were gathered together to Susa the royal residence under the custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and placed under the custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. The girl pleased him and gained his favor, so that he quickly gave her what she needed to enhance her beauty and her allowance of food and the seven maids selected from the king's household. He also transferred her and her maids to the best place in the women's quarters. Esther had not told her race nor her descent, for Mordecai had charged her not to; but every day Mordecai used to walk in front of the court of the women's quarters to inquire after Esther's health and what had been done with her.

When Esther's turn came to go in to the king, he loved her more than all the other women, and she became his favorite and won his affection, so that he placed the royal turban on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. Then the king gave a great feast to all his officials and courtiers in honor of Esther, and he remitted the taxes of the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality.

135. Hatred That Knew No Pity

In those days while Mordecai was sitting in the king's gate, two of the royal court attendants, Bigthan and Teresh, who guarded the entrance of the palace, became enraged and attempted to kill King Xerxes. But Mordecai learned of the conspiracy and disclosed it to Queen Esther, and she told the king in Mordecai's name. When the affair was investigated and the facts discovered, the conspirators were both hanged on a tree; and the incident was recorded in the daily record of events that was kept before the king.

After these events King Xerxes promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him to a place above all the officials who were with him. All the king's courtiers who were in the king's gate used to bow down before Haman, for so the king had commanded, but Mordecai did not bow down nor prostrate himself.

Then the king's courtiers, who were in the king's gate, said to Mordecai, 'Why do you disobey the king's command?' When they had spoken to him day after day without his listening to them, they informed Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's acts would be tolerated, for he had told them that he was a Jew. When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down

nor prostrate himself before him, he was furious; but it seemed to him beneath his dignity to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him Mordecai's race. Therefore Haman sought to destroy the race of Mordecai, including all the Jews.

So Haman said to King Xerxes, 'There is a certain people scattered among the races in all the provinces of your kingdom, whose laws differ from those of every other and who do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not right for the king to tolerate them. If it seems best to the king, let an order be given to destroy them, and I will pay ten thousand silver talents into the royal treasury.' So the king took off his ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the enemy of the Jews. The king said to Haman, 'The money is yours and the people also to do with them as you wish.' Accordingly despatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to put an end to all the Jews, young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and to plunder their possessions. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the people of Susa were perplexed.

136. A Queen's Efforts to Save Her People

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and strewed ashes on his head, and went out into the city and raised a loud and bitter cry of lamentation. And he went as far as the king's gate, for no one could enter the gate clothed with sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king's command and decree went, there was great mourning, fasting, weeping, and wailing

among the Jews; and many of them sat in sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther's maids and attendants told her about it, she was greatly troubled. She sent garments for Mordecai to put on, that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. So Esther called Hathach, one of the king's servants whom he had appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this meant and how it had happened.

So Hathach went out to Mordecai, to the city square in front of the king's gate; and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasury. Also he gave him a copy of the decree to destroy them, that had been published in Susa, to show to Esther for her information. He also charged her to go to the king and implore his mercy and to plead with him in behalf of her people.

When Hathach came and told Esther what Mordecai had said, she instructed Hathach to go and say to Mordecai, 'All the king's courtiers and the people of the king's provinces know that for every man or woman who goes to the king into the inner court without being called there is one penalty, death, except for the one to whom the king may hold out the golden sceptre signifying that he may live. But now for thirty days I have not been called to go in to the king.'

When Mordecai was told what Esther had said, he sent back this reply to Esther, 'Do not imagine that you alone of all the Jews will escape because you belong to the king's household. If you persist in remaining silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another quarter, but you and your family will perish; and who knows but that

you have been raised to the throne for a time like this?'

Then Esther sent this message to Mordecai: 'Go, gather all the Jews in Susa and fast for me; do not eat nor drink anything for three days and nights. I and my maids will fast also, and in this condition I will go in to the king, although it is contrary to the law, and if I perish, I perish.' So Mordecai proceeded to do as Esther had directed.

Afterward, on the third day, Esther put on her regalia and stood in the inner court of the royal palace opposite the king's house. The king was sitting on his throne in the palace, opposite the entrance; and when he saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she won his favor, and he held out to her the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the top of the sceptre. Then the king said to her, 'Whatever you wish, Queen Esther, and whatever your request is, it shall be granted, even if it is the half of the kingdom.' Esther said, 'If it seems best to the king, let the king and Haman come to-day to the banquet that I have prepared for him.' Then the king said, 'Bring Haman quickly, that Esther's wish may be gratified.'

So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared. While they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, 'Whatever your petition is, it shall be granted, and your request, it shall be done, even if it takes the half of my kingdom.' Esther answered, 'If I have won the king's favor and if it seems best to the king to grant my petition and to accede to my request, my petition and my request are that the king and Haman come to the banquet which I shall prepare for them; and to-morrow I will do as the king wishes.'

So Haman went out that day joyful and elated, but when he saw Mordecai in the king's gate and noticed that he neither stood up nor moved for him, he was furiously angry with Mordecai. Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home. Then he called together his friends and Zeresh his wife and recounted to them the greatness of his wealth, how many children he had, and all the ways in which the king had honored him, and how he had promoted him above the officials and the royal courtiers. Haman said, 'Queen Esther brought no one in with the king to the banquet which she had prepared but me, and tomorrow also I am invited by her along with the king. Yet all this does not satisfy me as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.'

Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, 'Let a gallows seventy-five feet high be erected, and in the morning speak to the king and let Mordecai be hanged on it. Then go merrily with the king to the banquet.' The advice pleased Haman, and so he had the gallows erected.

137. The Downfall of an Unscrupulous Conspirator

On that night the king was unable to sleep; so he gave orders to bring the books that recorded memorable deeds, and they were read before the king. And it was found recorded how Mordecai had furnished information regarding Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's attendants who guarded the entrance of the palace, who had attempted to kill King Xerxes. Then the king said, 'What honor and dignity have been conferred on Mordecai for this?' When the king's pages

who waited on him replied, 'Nothing has been done for him,' the king said, 'Who is in the court?' Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's house to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. So the king's pages said to him, 'Haman is standing there in the court.' The king said, 'Let him enter.' So Haman entered, and the king said to him, 'What shall be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor?' Haman said to himself, 'Whom besides me does the king wish to honor?' So Haman said to the king, 'For the man whom the king wishes to honor let a royal garment be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden and on whose head a royal crown has been placed. Then let the garment and the horse be placed in charge of one of the king's noble officials and let him clothe the man whom the king longs to honor and make him ride on the horse through the city square and proclaim before him, "This is what is done for the man whom the king wishes to honor."'

Then the king said to Haman, 'Make haste and take the garment and the horse, as you have said, and do thus to Mordecai the Jew, who sits in the king's gate. Omit nothing of all you have said.' So Haman took the garment and the horse and clothed Mordecai, and made him ride through the city square and proclaimed before him, 'This is what is done for the man whom the king wishes to honor.'

Mordecai returned to the king's gate, but Haman hurried to his house, mourning, with his head covered. And Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and to all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, 'If Mordecai before whom you have already been

humiliated is of the Jewish race, you can do nothing against him but will surely fall before him.'

While they were still talking with him, the king's attendants came and quickly took Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared. So the king and Haman went to drink with Queen Esther. And the king said to Esther as they were drinking wine, 'Whatever your petition is, Queen Esther, it shall be granted you; and whatever you request it shall be done, even if it takes half of the kingdom.' Then Queen Esther answered, 'If I have won your favor, O king, and if it seems best to the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request, for I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed, and completely annihilated!'

Then King Xerxes said to Queen Esther, 'Who is he and where is he whose heart has impelled him to do so?' Esther answered, 'A foe, an enemy, this wicked Haman.' Then Haman shrank in terror before the king and the queen. Thereupon the king rose in his wrath from the place where he was drinking wine and went into the palace garden. Haman stayed to beg Queen Esther for his life, for he saw that the king was fully determined to bring calamity upon him. As the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was lying prostrate on Esther's couch. Then the king said, 'Is he going to force the queen while I am present in the house?'

As the king spoke these words, the attendants covered Haman's face, and Harbonah, one of those who waited on the king, said, 'There are the gallows, seventy-five feet high, which Haman erected for Mordecai, who spoke a good word in behalf of the king, standing in the house of Haman!' The king said, 'Hang him on them.' So they hanged Haman on the gallows that

he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king was pacified.

138. THE DELIVERANCE OF THE PERSECUTED RACE

At that time King Xerxes gave the property of Haman the Jews' enemy to Queen Esther. And Mordecai was made one of the king's personal advisers, for Esther had disclosed his relationship to her. The king also drew off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther placed Mordecai in charge of Haman's property.

Then Esther sought another audience with the king and fell at his feet and with tears begged him to avert the evil planned by Haman the Agagite and to frustrate his designs against the Jews. The king held out to her the golden sceptre, and she arose and stood before him. And she said, 'If it seems best to the king, and if I have won his favor and he thinks it right, and if I please him, let written orders be given to revoke the despatches devised by Haman, which he wrote ordering the destruction of the Jews who are in all the king's provinces. For how can I bear to look upon the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my fellow countrymen?'

Then King Xerxes said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, 'See, I have given Esther the property of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he laid hands upon the Jews. Now you write in behalf of the Jews, as seems best to you, in the king's name and seal it with the king's signet ring; for a document that is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring cannot be revoked.'

So Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes and sealed it with the king's signet ring and sent by

mounted couriers who rode the swift, noble steeds, bred of the royal studs, despatches in which the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and make a stand for their life, to destroy, to kill, and annihilate all the armed forces of any race or province that might be hostile to them, including their children and women, and to take their goods as plunder. So the couriers who rode the swift, noble steeds went out, hastened and impelled by the king's command.

Meantime the decree had been given out in the royal palace at Susa; and Mordecai had gone out from the presence of the king in royal garments of violet and white and with a great crown of gold and with a robe of fine linen and purple. The people of Susa shouted and were glad. To the Jews there came light and gladness and joy and honor. Also in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, there was gladness and joy among the Jews and a holiday. And many of the peoples of the earth became Jews, for fear of the Jews took possession of them. The Jews gathered together in the cities throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes to resist those who sought to harm them; but no one took a stand against them, for all peoples were afraid of them. And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and those who attended to the king's business helped the Jews, because they were afraid of Mordecai.

On the fourteenth day of the month Adar the Jews rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. Therefore the Jews who live in the country villages keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar as a day of rejoicing and feasting and a holiday, and a day in which they send dainties to each other.

But the Jews in Susa rested on the fifteenth day of the same month and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

The Jews established and made it a custom for them, for their descendants, and for all who should join them, so that it might not be repealed, that they should continue to observe these two days as feasts each year. For Haman had plotted to destroy the Jews completely, and he cast pur, that is, the lot, to persecute and destroy them. For this reason these days have been called Purim.

EZRA

THE RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM

139. Cyrus's Decree Regarding the Temple

That the promise made by Jehovah through the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, Jehovah inspired Cyrus king of Persia in the first year of his reign to make this written proclamation throughout all his kingdom, 'Thus decrees Cyrus king of Persia: "Jehovah the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has charged me to build him a temple in Jerusalem which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people who desires to return, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the temple of Jehovah, the God of Israel. (He is the God who dwells at Jerusalem.) In every place where a remnant of Jehovah's people now reside, let the men of that place assist with silver, with gold, with equipment, and with animals, in addition to the voluntary offering for the house of God at Jerusalem."'

Then the heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites, including all whom God had inspired to build the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem, started to return. And all their neighbors supplied them with silver utensils, with gold, with equipment, with animals, and with precious things in addition to all that was offered voluntarily.

Cyrus the king brought out the vessels of the temple of Jehovah, which Nebuchadrezzar had carried from Jerusalem, and placed in the temple of his gods. Cyrus king of Persia had these brought out under the

direction of Mithredath the treasurer and turned over to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah; and he carried them with those who returned from captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem.

140. The Rebuilding of the Temple

Then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo preached to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel; and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak began at once to rebuild the temple of God which is at Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.

At that time Tattenai, the governor of the Persian province west of the Euphrates, and Shethar-bozenai and their associates, came to them and said, 'Who gave you permission to rebuild this temple and to finish this wall? And what are the names of the men who are building this edifice?' But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews, so that they were allowed to go on with the work until a report should reach Darius and a written decision should be sent back.

Then Darius the king issued a decree, and search was made in the archives where the official documents from Babylon had been placed. At Ecbatana in the royal residence in the province of Media, a roll was found in which was written the following record: 'Cyrus the king in his first year issued this decree: "Concerning the temple of God at Jerusalem: Let the temple where the people of Jehovah offer sacrifices and bring offerings to be made by fire be rebuilt. Make it ninety feet high and ninety feet wide. It shall be constructed with three layers of huge stones

and one layer of fresh timber; and let the expenses be paid out of the royal treasury. Also restore to their places the gold and silver utensils of the temple of God, which Nebuchadrezzar took from the temple at Jerusalem and brought to Babylon."

'Now therefore Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates, Shethar-bozenai, and the rulers of the province, go away from there; let the work on this house of God continue. Let the elders of the Jews rebuild it on its former site. I also direct that from the royal income, from the tribute of the province west of the Euphrates, you shall without delay pay all the expenses incurred by these men. And let whatever is needed be given to them each day without fail, including young oxen and rams and lambs for burnt-offerings to the God of heaven, also wheat, salt, wine, and oil, as the priests at Jerusalem direct, that they may regularly offer sacrifices of sweet odor to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and of his sons.

'I have further decreed that if any shall alter this command, a beam shall be pulled from his house, and he shall be lifted up and fastened to it, and for this crime his house shall be made a refuse heap. The God who has associated his name with this temple will overthrow all kings and peoples who attempt to alter this command or to destroy the temple of God at Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued the decree; let it be faithfully carried out.'

Then Tattenai the Persian obeyed the command of Darius the king; so the elders of the Jews built with success under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They completed the building as the God of Israel commanded on the ninth of April in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

NEHEMIAH

141. The Public Reading and Acceptance of the Ceremonial Law

When the month of September arrived all the people gathered together as one man in the open space before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book containing the Mosaic law which Jehovah had commanded Israel to follow. In the open space before the Water Gate from early morning to mid-day he read from the Mosaic law in the presence of the men and women and of those who could understand; and all the people listened to the reading of the book of the law.

On the twenty-fourth day of the same month the Israelites were assembled in sackcloth and with earth upon their heads to observe a fast. When they had taken their places, they read in the book of the law of Jehovah their God a fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confessed and worshipped him and said, 'Thou didst see the affliction of our forefathers in Egypt and hear their cry by the Red Sea. Thou also gavest thy good spirit to instruct them; and thou didst make their descendants as many as the stars of heaven and brought them into the land which thou didst promise their forefathers they should enter and possess. So they ate and were filled and grew fat and lived in luxury because of thy great goodness. Yet they acted arrogantly and did not obey thy commands, but broke thy laws and were rebellious and would not listen. But thou didst bear with them

many years and warned them by thy spirit through thy prophets, yet they would not heed. Therefore thou didst deliver them into the power of foreign peoples; but in thy great mercy thou didst not completely destroy nor forsake them, for thou art a gracious and merciful God!

'Now, O our God, the great, the mighty, and the awe-inspiring God, who keepest thy compact and showest kindness, let not all the affliction seem slight in thy sight that has come on us, on our rulers, our nobles, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and on all thy people from the time when the kings of Assyria ruled over us to this day. However, thou hast been just in spite of all that has come upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wrong!

'See, we this day are but slaves in the land thou gavest to our forefathers that they might eat its fruit and enjoy its good gifts, and it yields a great income to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins. They too have power over our bodies and over our cattle to do what they please, and we are in great distress. In the light of all this we make a solemn compact and write it out.'

Then our officials, our Levites, and our priests signed the solemn compact. All those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands in order to keep the law of God, and their wives, their sons and their daughters and every one who had knowledge and insight, strongly supported their relatives and nobles, and solemnly promised and swore that they would live in accord with the law of God which was given by Moses his servant and observe and carry out all the commands and laws and statutes of Jehovah our Lord.

We also solemnly agreed not to let our daughters

marry the peoples of the land and not to let their daughters marry our sons; and that if the peoples of the land should bring wares or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we would not buy of them on the Sabbath or on a holy day; and that on the seventh year we would leave the land uncultivated, and that we would not exact the payment of any debt.

We assumed the obligation to give each year the third part of a silver piece for the service of the temple of our God, for the bread that was set before Jehovah, for the daily cereal and burnt-offerings, for those made on the Sabbaths, the new moons, and the fixed feasts, for the holy things, for the sin offerings to make expiation for Israel, and for all the work that is done in the temple of our God. We also agreed to bring each year to the temple of Jehovah the earliest products of our soil and the first of all the fruits of every tree; also to bring the first-born of our sons and of our cattle, as is prescribed in the law, and the first-born of our herds and flocks to the priests who officiate in the temple of our God; and that we would not neglect his temple.

142. Nehemiah's Response to the Call to Service

In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes' reign, in the month of November, I was in Shushan the royal residence, when Hanani, one of my brothers, and certain men from Judah arrived. I asked them about the Jews who had escaped, the survivors from the captivity, and about Jerusalem. They told me, 'The survivors from the captivity there in the province are in great distress and are objects of reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been destroyed by fire.'

When I learned these facts I sat down and wept and mourned several days; then I fasted and offered this petition to the God of heaven, 'I beseech thee, O Jehovah, the God of heaven, the great and awe-inspiring God, who keepest his solemn compact and showest kindness to those who love and follow thy commands; let thine ears now be attentive and thine eyes open to hear the prayers of thy servant which I am now making before thee day and night for the Israelites thy servants, while I confess the sins which we have sinned against thee; for I too and my family have sinned. We have done thee great wrong and have not kept the commands nor the definite laws and regulations which thou didst proclaim through thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the message which thou didst command thy servant Moses to proclaim: "If you prove faithless I will scatter you abroad

among the peoples; but if you turn to me and keep my commands and do them, then though your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place with which I have chosen to associate my name."

'Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let thine ear be attentive to the petition of thy servant and to the petitions of thy servants who take pleasure in worshipping thee, and give success to thy servant this day and grant that he may win this man's sympathy.'

Now I was cupbearer to the king, and in the month of March in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes the king I had charge of the wine offered to the king. Up to this time I had not been sad; so the king said to me, 'Why is your face sad, for you are not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart.' Then I was exceedingly afraid, and I said to the king, 'Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place where my forefathers are buried, lies in ruins and its gates are destroyed by fire?' Then the king said to me, 'What do you want?' So I prayed to the God of heaven and said to the king, 'If it please the king and if your servant has won your favor, then send me to Judah to the city where my forefathers lie buried, that I may rebuild it.' The king said to me (and the queen was also sitting by him), 'How long will your journey take, and when will you return?' Then I set for him a definite time when I would return, so that the king was willing to let me go.

I also said to the king, 'If the king is willing, let official letters be given me to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates, that they may let me

pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's park, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the castle which guards the temple and for the wall of the city and for the house in which I shall live.' The king granted me all this, for my God kindly cared for me.

143. The Arrival at Jerusalem

Then I went to the governors of the province and gave them the king's official letters. The king had sent with me military officers and horsemen; and when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite slave heard about it, it troubled them exceedingly, that one had come to look out for the welfare of the Israelites.

So I arrived at Jerusalem. After I had been there three days I rose in the night, together with a few of my followers. I told no one what my God had put into my mind to do for Jerusalem, and I had no animal with me except the one upon which I rode. I went out by night through the Valley Gate, toward the Dragon's Well and to the Dung Gate; and I investigated carefully the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and where its gates had been destroyed by fire. Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no place for the animal on which I rode to pass.

I also went up in the night along the Brook Kidron and examined the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate and so returned. The rulers did not know where I went or what I did, and I had not as yet told my plan to the Jews or to the priests or to the nobles or to the rulers or to the others who did the work.

Then I said to them, 'You see the bad condition in which we are, how Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates are destroyed by fire. Come and let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be an object of reproach.' I told them too how my God had kindly cared for me and the words which the king had spoken to me. They said, 'Let us go to work and build.' So they entered heartily into the good work.

144. Courage in the Face of Opposition

Now when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he was so angry and indignant that he mocked the Jews. He spoke before his tribesmen and the army of Samaria and said, 'What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they leave it to God? Will they offer a sacrifice? Will they complete the work in a day? Will they recover the stones from the heaps of rubbish even after they have been destroyed by fire?'

Tobiah the Ammonite was with him, and he said, 'This which they are building—if a fox should go up on it, he would break down their stone wall!'

But we went on rebuilding the wall; and all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people were eager to work. But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabians and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem was progressing so that the breaches began to be closed, they were exceedingly angry. And they all conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and produce a panic there. But we prayed to our God and set a watch as a protection against them day and night.

Then the Judean community said, 'The strength of the burden-bearers is failing and there is so much rub-

bish that we shall not be able to rebuild the wall. Our foes also have said, "They will not know nor see until we come among them and kill them and put an end to the work."' The Jews who dwelt near them came and told us of ten places where we might be attacked. Therefore in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the protected places, I stationed the people by families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. When I saw how afraid they were, I rose and said to the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, 'Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is invincible, and fight for your relatives, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your homes.'

When our enemies heard that their conspiracy was known to us and that God had thwarted it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work. From that time on, while half of my servants were engaged in the work, half of them held the lances, the shields, the bows, and the coats of mail; and the rulers stood behind all the people of Judah. Those who built the wall and those who bore burdens were also armed, each using one of his hands for the work, and was ready with the other to grasp his spear. And each builder worked with his sword fastened at his side. The man who sounded the alarm was by me; and I said to the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, 'The work is great and extensive, and we on the wall are widely separated from each other. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally about us; our God will fight for us.'

So we worked hard, while half of them held the lances from the gray of morning until the stars came out. Also I said at that time to the people, 'Let each man with his servant stay in Jerusalem, that they may guard us by night and labor by day.' So neither

I, nor any of my relatives, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard who accompanied me took off our clothes, but each kept his spear in his right hand.

145. Nehemiah's Social Reforms

Then the common people and their wives raised a loud complaint against their fellow Jews. Some said, 'We are compelled to give our sons and our daughters in pledge to get grain that we may eat and live.' Others said, 'We are mortgaging our fields and our vineyards and our houses, that we may get grain because of the shortage.' Others said, 'We have borrowed money to pay tribute to the king. Yet as a matter of fact our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children as their children; but now we are compelled to sell our sons and our daughters as slaves, and some of our daughters have already been thus reduced to slavery, and it is not in our power to prevent it, for our fields and our vineyards belong to the nobles.'

When I heard their complaint and these statements, I was very angry. And I took my own counsel and reprimanded the nobles and the rulers and said to them, 'You exact interest each of his fellow Jew.'

Then I called a great popular assembly to protest against their action; and I said to them, 'We ourselves have according to our ability purchased the freedom of our fellow Jews who have been sold to the heathen; and would you sell your fellow Jews, and should they be sold to us?' Then they were silent and could find nothing to say. So I said, 'What you are doing is not good. Ought you not to live in the fear of God, so as not to be an object of reproach to our heathen foes? I too, my relatives, and my servants lend the people money and grain. Let us stop taking this interest.

Restore to them at once their fields, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, and the interest on the money, the grain, the new wine, and the oil, that you exact from them.'

Then they said, 'We will restore them and will demand nothing from them; we will do even as you say.' Then I called the priests and took an oath of them that they would do as they had promised. Also I shook out the fold of my garment, and said, 'So may God shake out every man from his house and from the fruit of his labor, who does not keep this promise; even so may he be forcibly deprived of what he has.' All those assembled said, 'So may it be,' and praised Jehovah. The people also did as they had promised.

Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even to the thirty-second year of the reign of Artaxerxes the king, that is for twelve years, I and my relatives did not eat the food which was due me as governor. But the former governors who were before me were a source of expense to the people and took from them bread and wine and forty pieces of silver each day; and their servants oppressed the people. But I did not do so, for I feared God. I also devoted myself to the work on the wall, and we did not buy any land, but all my servants were gathered there for work. Also a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, in addition to those who came to us from among surrounding nations, were at my table. Each day one ox and six choice sheep and fowls were prepared at my expense, and once in ten days wine in abundance. Yet with all this expense I did not demand the food which was due me as governor, because the public service rested heavily upon this people. Remember to my credit, O my God, all that I have done for them!

146. Nehemiah's Tact in Avoiding Pitfalls

When it was reported to Sanballat and to Tobiah and to Geshem the Arabian and to the rest of our enemies, that I had rebuilt the wall and that there was no breach left in it—even though at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates—Sanballat and Geshem sent this message to me: 'Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.' But they planned to do me personal injury. So I sent messengers to them with the reply, 'I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work stop, while I leave it to go down to you?'

They sent to me in this way four times, and I gave them the same answer. Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same way the fifth time with an open letter in his hand in which was written, 'It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu confirms it, that you and the Jews plan to rebel, and that this is the reason you are building the wall, and that you would be their ruler, and that you also have appointed prophets to proclaim you at Jerusalem, and say, "There is a ruler in Judah." Now it will be reported to the Persian king to this effect. Come therefore, let us consult together.' Then I sent this reply to him, 'There is no truth in what you say, and the report is simply your invention.' For they all wanted to make us afraid, thinking, 'They may lose courage, so that the work may not be done.' But now, O God, give me courage!

When I went to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetable, he was shut up at home, but he said, 'Let us go together to the house of God, into the inside of the temple, and let us shut its doors, for men are coming to kill you in the night; yes, in the night they are coming to kill you!' But I

said, 'Should such a man as I flee? How could a layman like me enter the temple hall and still live? I will not enter.' Then I perceived clearly that God had not sent him, but that he had made this prediction about me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him, that I might be frightened and so sin. This would have furnished them the basis for a malicious report with which they would have taunted me.

Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat and these acts, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of those who wished to frighten me!

So after fifty-two days the wall was finished. When our enemies heard of it, all the surrounding nations were afraid, and it seemed very wonderful to them, and they knew that this work had been done by our God.

147. The Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem

Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites had been appointed, I placed my brother Hanani, the commander of the castle, in charge of Jerusalem, for he was a faithful man and more God-fearing than many. And I said to them, 'Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and at night, while the watchmen are still on guard, let them shut the doors and bar them. Also let the inhabitants of Jerusalem be on guard, each at his post opposite his own house.'

Now the city was wide and large, but there were few people in it, and the houses had not been rebuilt. So my God put it into my mind to gather together the nobles and the minor officials and the people. The public officials lived in Jerusalem; and the rest of the

people drew lots that one out of every ten should live in Jerusalem, the sacred city, while the others remained in the villages.

Then I had the officials of Judah take their position upon the wall, and I formed two great choral processions. The first marched to the right upon the wall toward the Dung Gate; and behind them went Hoshaiah and half of the officials of Judah. At the Fountain Gate they went straight up the stairs of the City of David by the ascent of the wall above the House of David to the Water Gate on the east of the city.

The other choral procession went to the left on the wall above the Tower of the Furnaces, and I after them, with half of the people, to the broad wall and above the Gate of Ephraim and past the Old Gate, the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, and the Tower of the Hundred to the Sheep Gate. Then they stood in the Gate of the Guard. So the two choral processions took their position in the temple and I and the rulers, half of whom were with me.

Then the singers sang loudly, and the people offered many sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had given them great cause for joy. The women and children rejoiced, too, so that the cries of joy at Jerusalem were heard far away.

LAWS

EXODUS

148. Each Man's Obligation to Protect the Person and Property of Another

If an ox fatally gores a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned to death and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted.

But if the ox already has the habit of goring, and its owner had been informed, but has not kept it in, with the result that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner shall also be put to death.

If a price is fixed, so that the owner can save his life by paying a certain sum, he shall give whatever amount is determined.

If the ox has gored a boy or a girl, this law shall also be executed.

If a man opens a cistern or digs a pit but does not cover it, and an ox or an ass falls into it, the owner of the cistern shall make good the loss; he shall give money to the owner of the animal but the carcass shall belong to him.

If a man steals an ox or a sheep and kills it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for one ox and four sheep for one sheep. If he has nothing, he shall be sold as a slave to pay for what he has stolen, and then whether it is an ox, or an ass, or a sheep, he must restore twice its value.

If a man burns over a field or vineyard and lets the fire spread so that it destroys a neighbor's field, he

shall make restitution out of the best products of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

If a fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that the shocks of grain or the standing grain or the field are destroyed, the one who kindled the fire must make restitution.

If a man gives his neighbor money or personal property to keep and it is stolen out of that man's house, the thief, if caught, shall pay back three times the amount taken. If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house shall come before the judges and swear in the sight of God that he himself has not taken his neighbor's goods.

In every case of fraudulent dealing, whether it concern an ox, an ass, a sheep, clothing, or any object lost which any one claims to be his, the case of both parties shall come before the judges who represent God. He whom God condemns shall make double restitution to his neighbor.

If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is hurt or dies while its owner is not with it, the man must make restitution. But if its owner was present, the man need not make restitution, for being a hired animal, the loss is reckoned in its hire.

149. Kindness to Men and Animals

You shall not wrong nor oppress a resident alien, for you were once resident aliens in the land of Egypt.

You shall not impose upon a widow or a fatherless child. If you do in any way impose upon them, and they cry to me for help, I [Jehovah] will surely hear their cry, and my anger will be aroused and I will kill you by the sword and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

If you lend money to any one of my people among you who is poor, you shall not treat him as a creditor would, nor shall you demand interest from him.

If you take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset, for that is his only covering, it is his garment with which he covers his body.

If you meet your enemy's ox or ass as it is going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again.

If you see the ass of him who hates you lying prostrate under its burden, and you hesitate to help him, you must surely help him with it.

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in what it produces, but in the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor among your people may gather the food and that the wild beasts may eat what they leave. You shall do the same with your vineyard and with your olive trees.

You shall work six days, but on the seventh you shall rest, that your ox and ass may have rest, and that the son of your female slave and the resident alien may be refreshed.

150. Responsibilities of Witnesses and Judges

You shall not help speed a false report.

Do not conspire with a wicked man to offer misleading testimony.

You shall not follow the majority in doing what is wrong.

You shall not offer testimony in a case so as to pervert justice.

You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his case.

You shall not prevent justice being done to your poor countryman.

Keep aloof from every false matter.

Do not condemn the innocent to death nor him who has a just cause.

Do not vindicate the wicked.

Take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of those who see and prevents justice being done.

151. The Duty of Love and Loyalty to God

Hear O Israel: Jehovah our God is the one Lord. You shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Behold, the heavens, the highest heavens, the earth and all that is on it belong to Jehovah your God. Jehovah fixed his love on your forefathers alone, and he chose their descendants after them and you out of all peoples, as is now the case. Therefore open your heart to him and no longer refuse to be guided by him. For Jehovah your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, the awe-inspiring God, who shows no partiality and takes no bribe, who does justice to the orphan and widow and loves the resident alien and gives him food and clothing. Love Jehovah your God and always keep his precepts, his statutes, his laws, and his commands.

152. Public Worship to be Joyous and Social

Three times each year all your men shall appear before Jehovah your God in the place which he shall choose, at the feast at which you eat no bread made with yeast, at the feast of weeks, and at the feast of tabernacles. They shall not appear before Jehovah empty-handed; every man shall give as he is able, according as Jehovah your God has blessed you.

Observe the spring festival and celebrate the passover feast in honor of Jehovah your God; for in the

month when the green ears of grain were forming Jehovah your God brought you out from Egypt by night. You shall sacrifice the passover offering in honor of Jehovah your God. For six days you shall eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day there shall be an assembly in honor of Jehovah your God in which you shall do no work.

You shall count seven weeks from the time you put the sickle into the standing grain. Then you shall celebrate the feast of weeks in honor of Jehovah your God, using the voluntary offerings which you bring with you according as Jehovah your God has blessed you. You and your son and your daughter, your male and female slaves, the Levites who live in your city, and the resident aliens, the fatherless, and the widows who live with you shall rejoice before Jehovah in the place with which Jehovah your God shall choose to have his name associated.

After you have gathered in the products of your threshing-floor and winepress, you shall celebrate the feast of tabernacles for seven days. You shall rejoice at that feast, together with your son and your daughter, your male and female slaves, the Levites, the resident aliens, the fatherless, and the widows, who are in your town. You shall celebrate the feast seven days in honor of Jehovah your God in the place which he shall choose, for Jehovah your God will bless you in all your increase and in all the work of your hands, and you shall be altogether happy.

153. The Duty of Parents to Instruct Their Children

Fix in your minds these commands which I give you this day. You shall impress them upon your chil-

dren, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you arise. You shall bind them as a reminder on your hand, and they shall be like frontlets between your eyes, and you shall inscribe them on the posts of your house and on your doors.

When your son asks you in the future, 'What is the meaning of the precepts, the statutes, and the laws which Jehovah our God has commanded you?' you shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; but Jehovah brought us out of Egypt by his might. He performed before our eyes great miracles and wonders that proved disastrous to Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his household. When Jehovah led us out from there, to bring us into the land which he had sworn that he would give to us, he commanded us to observe all these laws and to serve Jehovah our God, that we might always prosper and that he might preserve our lives as he has to this day. We shall do right if we faithfully carry out this obligation to Jehovah our God, as he has commanded us.'

154. Consideration for the Dependent

When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, you shall not go into his house to take a pledge from him. You shall stand outside while the man to whom you make the loan brings out the pledge to you.

No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone as a pledge, for in so doing he takes life itself as a pledge.

You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he be of your own race or of the aliens who are living in your land and town. You shall pay him his wages each day before the sun goes

down, for he is poor and sets his heart upon it. Let him not complain against you to Jehovah, and you be found guilty.

You shall not deliver to his master a slave who has fled to you for refuge from his master. He shall make his home among you, in the place which he shall choose in one of your towns, where it pleases him best; you shall not oppress him.

If one of your own race, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, and serves you six years, in the seventh year you shall set him free. When you set him free, you shall not let him go away empty-handed. You shall furnish him liberally from your flock, your threshing-floor, and your winepress; according as Jehovah your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. And you shall remember that you were once slaves in the land of Egypt and that Jehovah your God freed you. Therefore I command you to do this.

You shall not prevent the resident alien or the fatherless from securing justice, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge; but you shall remember that you were once slaves in Egypt, and that Jehovah your God freed you from there. Therefore I command you to do this.

Jehovah so loves the resident alien that he gives to him food and clothing. Love then the resident alien; for you were once resident aliens in the land of Egypt.

155. Generosity to the Poor and Needy

When you reap your harvest and through oversight have left a sheaf in your field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be left for the resident alien, for the fatherless, and for the widow, that Jehovah your God may bless you in all the work that you undertake.

When you beat the olives from your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs a second time. What is left shall be for the resident alien, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When you gather the grapes from your vineyard, you shall not glean the grapes that you leave behind. They shall be for the resident alien, for the fatherless, and for the widow. You shall remember that you were once slaves in the land of Egypt. Therefore I command you to do this.

You shall not lend anything on interest to your fellow countryman. To a foreigner you may lend on interest, but to your fellow countryman you shall not lend on interest, that Jehovah your God may bless you in all that you undertake.

If there be with you a poor man, one of your fellow countrymen, in any of your cities in the land which Jehovah your God gives you, you shall not be hard-hearted nor refuse to lend to your poor brother; you shall surely be generous to him, and lend him sufficient for his needs. Beware lest this base thought come into your mind, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and you turn a deaf ear to your poor brother and give him nothing, and he cry to Jehovah against you, and you be guilty. You shall surely give to him, and your heart shall not be unwilling when you give to him, because for this Jehovah your God will bless you in all your work, and in all that you undertake. For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, 'You shall surely be generous to your brother, to your needy, and to the poor in your land.'

156. Upright Dealing in All Business Relations

You shall do nothing that is unfair either through the law courts or with rule or weight or measure. You shall use accurate scales, accurate weights, and accurate dry and liquid measures. If any one sins and breaks faith with Jehovah by deceiving his neighbor in regard to a deposit, or something committed to his keeping, or by robbing or defrauding his neighbor, or if he finds something which was lost and denies it and perjures himself, if by doing any one of these things a man has sinned and so is guilty, he shall restore that which he took by robbery, or the thing which he obtained by fraud, or the deposit which was entrusted to him, or the lost thing which he found, or anything about which he swore falsely. He shall restore it in full and shall add to it a fifth more on the day that he is found guilty; he shall give it to its rightful owner.

157. Man's Duties to His Neighbor

You shall not deal falsely with one another.
You shall not lie to one another.
You shall not swear falsely in my name.
You shall not oppress nor rob your neighbor.
You shall not curse the deaf.
You shall not put a stumbling-block before the blind.
You shall not favor the powerful, but you shall justly judge your neighbor.
You shall not spread slanderous reports among your people.

You shall not seek the life-blood of your neighbor.

You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart.

You shall warn your neighbor and not incur sin on his account.

You shall not take vengeance nor bear a grudge against the members of your race.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

You shall arise before the hoary head and honor the person of an old man.

If an alien resides in your land, you shall do him no wrong. You shall treat him as a native, and you shall love him as yourself.

THE PROPHETS

AMOS

THE WORDS OF AMOS, ONE OF THE SHEPHERDS FROM TEKOA, AND THE THINGS THAT HE SAW CONCERNING NORTHERN ISRAEL DURING THE REIGN OF JEROBOAM THE SON OF JOASH, TWO YEARS BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE

158. The Inevitable Consequences of Cruelty and Social Oppression

Jehovah has said:

Because of three crimes of Damascus,
For four, I will not avert it,
For they crushed the dwellers in Gilead
With threshing sledges of iron.
I will send into Hazael's house fire;
It shall devour Benhadad's palaces.
I will break the defense of Damascus,
I will cut off Bikath-Aven's citizens,
And Beth-Eden's sceptre-bearer,
And to Kir shall the Arameans be exiled.

Jehovah has spoken.

Jehovah has said:

Because of three crimes of Gaza,
For four, I will not avert it,
For they carried whole villages captive,
And delivered them over to Edom.
I will send into Gaza's walls fire,
And it shall devour her palaces.

I will cut off from Ashdod its citizens,
And Ashkelon's sceptre-bearer;
I will turn my hand against Ekron,
And all the Philistines shall perish.

Jehovah has spoken.

Jehovah has said:

Because of three crimes of the Ammonites,
For four, I will not avert it,
For they ripped up the mothers of Gilead,
To make their own land the greater.
I will set Rabbah's walls afire,
And the flames shall devour her palaces,
With shouts on the day of battle,
And a tempest on the day of the whirlwind;
And their king shall go into exile,
He and his nobles together.

Jehovah has spoken.

Jehovah has said:

Because of three crimes of Israel,
For four, I will not avert it,
For they sell the upright for money,
And the poor for a pair of shoes;
On the head of the needy they trample,
And pervert the cause of the humble.
A man and his father go in to the maid,
And thus dishonor my holy name!
Upon garments taken in pledge
They stretch out by every altar,
And the wine of those who are fined
They drink in the house of their God!

Yet it was I who brought you from the land of Egypt,
And led you through the wilderness for forty years,
And brought you here to inherit the Amorite land,

THE PROPHETS

AMOS

THE WORDS OF AMOS, ONE OF THE SHEPHERDS FROM TEKOA, AND THE THINGS THAT HE SAW CONCERNING NORTHERN ISRAEL DURING THE REIGN OF JEROBOAM THE SON OF JOASH, TWO YEARS BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE

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Jehovah has spoken.

Jehovah has said:

Because of three crimes of Gaza,
For four, I will not avert it,
For they carried whole villages captive,
And delivered them over to Edom.
I will send into Gaza's walls fire,
And it shall devour her palaces.

Can ruin strike a city and Jehovah not have caused it?
Surely Jehovah the Lord makes no plan
That he does not reveal to his servants the prophets.
The lion has roared; who does not fear?
Jehovah has spoken; who can but prophesy?

160. The Crimes that Utterly Destroy a Nation

Proclaim on the towers in Ashdod,
And over Egypt's palaces;
Gather on Samaria's hilltops,
And there see confusion manifold,
In its midst, acts of oppression!
For they know not how to do right,
They keep heaping up in their palaces
The fruits of violence and robbery.

Therefore Jehovah declares:
'A foe shall invest the land,
And your wall of defense be thrown down,
And your palaces shall all be plundered.
As a shepherd saves from a lion's jaws
Two shin-bones or the tip of an ear,
So shall the Israelites be saved—
They who sit there in Samaria
On the corner of a couch
Or on a silken divan!'

'Hear and warn the house of Jacob,'
Declares Jehovah, the God of hosts,
'On the day when I punish Israel's crimes,
I will also destroy the altars of Bethel,
The horns of the altar shall be broken,
They shall fall in ruins upon the ground.
I will smite the winter and summer houses;
The houses of ivory too shall crumble,
And the palaces be swept away.'

Jehovah has spoken.

Listen, you cows of Bashan,
There on Samaria's hilltop,
Who oppress the poor
And crush the needy;
You who say to your husbands,
'Bring plenty that we may drink!'
Jehovah has sworn by his holiness:
'Behold the days are coming,
When you shall be taken with hooks,
The last of you with fish-hooks.
Through the breaches you shall go,
As captives, cast out naked.'

Jehovah has spoken.

161. The Only Way to Win Divine Approval

Seek Jehovah and live,
Lest a fire break out in Israel,
And devour, with none to quench it.

You who turn justice to wormwood,
Casting righteousness to the ground,
And hate him who protests in court,
And loathe one who speaks the truth,
Because you tread down the poor,
And exact from them taxes in grain,
You may build yourselves homes of hewn stone,
But you shall not live in them.
You may set out charming vineyards,
But you shall not drink their wine.
For I know your many crimes,
And how heinous are your sins,
You foes of the righteous, you bribe-takers!
Who deprive the poor of their rights!

Therefore at such a time
The prudent man keeps silent,
For it is an evil day.

Seek good and not evil, that you may live,
That Jehovah, the God of hosts,
May be with you as you claim.
Hate evil and love what is good,
In the courts establish justice;
Perhaps Jehovah of hosts
Will be kind to the remnant of Israel.

Alas! you who long for the day of Jehovah!
What is the day of Jehovah to you?
It is darkness, without any light;
As when one flees from a lion,
And then a bear confronts him,
Or as when one goes into his house,
And lays his hand on the wall,
And a serpent is there to bite him!
Shall Jehovah's day not be darkness,
Utter darkness with no ray of light?

I hate, I despise your festivals,
And take no delight in your feasts,
Though you bring to me burnt-offerings.
I will not accept your gifts,
Nor look at the beasts you offer.
Away with the noise of your songs!
I will not hear the strum of your harps;
But let justice roll on as a flood,
And right as a rushing stream!

162. The Betrayers of the Nation

Woe to the careless rulers of Zion,
The confident ones on Samaria's hilltop,
The lords of the first of all the nations,
To whom the Israelites resort!

They recline on ivory couches,
And lie sprawled upon their divans,

They eat the lambs from the flock,
And calves from out the stall.

Like David they chant to the lyre,
They invent new musical instruments,
They drink wine by the bowlful,
And anoint themselves with fine oils.

They weep not over Israel's ruin!
So now they shall go into exile,
At the head of a line of captives,
And the revellers' din shall cease.

Can horses run on a cliff?
Does one plow the sea with oxen,
That you turn justice to poison,
And the fruit of uprightness to wormwood?
You who rejoice over nothing,
And boast, 'Have we not by our strength
Made ourselves now irresistible?'

Jehovah of hosts declares:
'I am raising up against you,
O house of Israel, a nation,
To harass you from Hamath's pass
To the brook on the edge of the desert.'

163. The Rejection of Amos's Message

The Lord Jehovah showed me,
And I saw him forming locusts,
When the aftergrowth scarce was up.
And when they were making an end
Of devouring the grass of the land,
I said, 'O Jehovah, forgive!
How can Jacob stand this,
For indeed he is so small?'
At this Jehovah relented;
'It shall not be,' he declared.

The Lord Jehovah showed me,
And I saw him giving command
To execute judgment by fire;
And it dried up the source of the springs,
And began to devour the fields.
Then I said, 'O Lord, let this cease,
How can Jacob stand this,
For indeed he is so small?'
At this Jehovah relented;
'Nor shall this be,' he said.

The Lord Jehovah showed me,
And I saw him beside a wall,
With a plummet in his hand.
Then Jehovah said to me,
'Amos, what do you see?'
'A plummet,' I said. He replied:
'See, I am setting a plummet,
In the midst of Israel my people;
For I will no longer spare them.
Isaac's shrines shall be desolate,
And Israel's temples in ruin!
And I will overthrow by the sword
The house of Jeroboam.'

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent this message to Jeroboam the ruler of Israel, 'Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the commonwealth of Israel; the country cannot bear all that he is saying. For Amos has said, "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and the people of Israel shall surely be carried away captive from their land."'

To Amos Amaziah said, 'Away, you visionary! Off with you to the land of Judah. There eat your bread and there play the prophet; but you shall no longer play the prophet at Bethel, for it is a royal sanctuary and an imperial residence.'

Amos answered Amaziah, 'I am no prophet, nor do I belong to a prophetic guild; I am only a pruner of sycomores. It was Jehovah who took me from following the flock and said to me, "Go, preach to my people Israel."

'Now therefore hear the message of Jehovah: "You say, You shall not play the prophet against Israel, nor froth against the house of Isaac!" Therefore Jehovah declares:

"Your wife shall be a harlot in the city,
Your sons and daughters by the sword shall fall,
Your land shall be divided and sold,
And you yourself shall die on heathen soil,
For Israel shall be exiled from its land."'

164. The Results of National Degeneracy

The Lord Jehovah showed me,
And a basket of ripe fruit I saw.
He asked, 'Amos, what do you see?'
'A basket of ripe fruit,' I answered.
Then Jehovah said to me,
'The ripe hour has come to Israel,
I will no longer spare my people.'

Hear this, you who crush the needy,
And oppress the poor of the land,
Saying, 'When shall New Moon be over,
That we may sell our corn,
The Sabbath, that we may barter,
And sell the sweepings of grain,
Making measure small and price high,
And cheating with scales that are false?'

Jehovah has sworn by the glory of Jacob:

I will never forget your deeds!
I will make the sun set at noon,

And darken the earth in broad day,
I will turn to mourning your festivals,
And all your songs into dirges,
And put sackcloth on every loin,
On every head the mourning-tonsure,
I will make them mourn as for an only son,
And like a bitter day shall be its end.

'See, the days are coming,'
Jehovah the Lord declares,
'When I will send hunger throughout the land,
Not hunger for bread nor thirst for water,
But that they may hear the words of Jehovah.
They shall wander from sea to sea,
From north to far east they shall rove,
Seeking the word of Jehovah,
But shall not be able to find it.'

I saw the Lord by the altar,
And he said, 'Strike the pillars' capitals,
That the thresholds also may tremble!
On the heads of all break them off;
By the sword I will kill the last of them,
Not one shall run away,
Not one of them escape.

If they dig to the abode of the dead,
My hand will bring them back.
Should they climb up even to heaven,
From there I will hurl them down.
If they hide on the top of Carmel,
I will find them there and seize them.

Should they hide in the bottom of the sea?
I will bid the sea-serpent bite them.
If their enemies take them captive,
I will order the sword to kill them;
I will keep my eyes upon them,
For evil and not for good.'

'Are you not to me as the Cushites,
O Israelites?' asks Jehovah;
'Did I not bring Israel from Egypt,
As I did the Philistines from Crete,
And the Arameans from Kir?'
The eyes of Jehovah the Lord
Are on this sinful nation;
I will sweep it from off the earth.'

HOSEA

THE MESSAGE FROM JEHOVAH THAT CAME TO HOSEA THE SON OF BEERI DURING THE REIGN OF JEROBOAM THE SON OF JOASH, THE RULER OF ISRAEL

165. Hosea's Undying Love for His Guilty Wife

When Jehovah spoke at first to Hosea, he told him to go and marry a woman who later proved unfaithful and was the mother of illegitimate children, even as the people of Israel were unfaithful to Jehovah. So he went and married Gomer the daughter of Diblaim.

After she gave birth to a son, Jehovah said, 'Name him Jezreel, for soon I will avenge upon the house of Jehu the blood shed at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the nation Israel. At that time I will break the power of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.'

When Gomer gave birth to a daughter, Jehovah said to Hosea, 'Name her Unpitied, for I will no longer have pity and spare the nation Israel.'

After Gomer had weaned Unpitied, she gave birth to another son, and Jehovah said, 'Name him Not-my-people, for you are not my people and I do not belong to you.'

Then Jehovah said to me, 'Continue to love this woman who is loved by a friend and is an adulteress, just as I love the Israelites, although they turn to other gods and love to eat raisin cakes at their festivals.'

So I bought her for fifteen pieces of silver and eight bushels and a measure of barley; and I said to her, 'Many years you shall belong to me alone; you shall not live an immoral life nor belong to another, and I also will be loyal to you.' The Israelites too shall

live many years without a ruler or official, without offering or heathen pillars, without the sacred lot or household gods.

166. Jehovah's Undying Love for Guilty Israel

'Plead with your mother, plead,
For Israel is not my wife,
And I am not her husband.
Let her put away immorality,
And unfaithfulness from her breast,
That I need not strip her naked,
Bare as the day she was born,
And make her like a wilderness,
Or like a waterless land,
And leave her to die of thirst.

For even now she is saying,
"I will go out after my lovers,
Who give me my bread and water,
My wool and flax, my oil, and drink."
I will hedge her ways, therefore, with thorns,
And will build a wall about her,
That she cannot find her paths.
Though she go in pursuit of her lovers,
She shall not overtake them,
She shall seek but shall not find them.
But she herself does not know
That I it was who provided for her
The corn, the new wine, and the oil.

I will therefore take back my grain in its time,
And my new wine in its season,
I will take back my wool and my flax,
With which she covers her nakedness;
And so will reveal her shame
Before the eyes of her lovers;
None shall snatch her from my hand.

I will cause all her mirth to cease,
Her feasts, her new moons and her sabbaths.
And thus punish her for the days
When she made to the baals her offerings,
Decked herself with earrings and jewels,
And went in pursuit of her lovers,
But forgot me,' Jehovah declares.

'Therefore see, I will allure her,
And bring her back to the wilderness,
And speak to her tenderly.
I will give her back her vineyards,
And make the Valley of Sorrows
Again a door of hope.
She shall go up there as in her youth,
As when she came up from Egypt.'

'On that day,' Jehovah declares,
'Israel shall call me "husband,"
She shall no more call me, "master."
I will take the baals' names from her mouth,
That they may no more be remembered.

I will then betroth you forever;
Betroth you to me in righteousness,
In justice, in love, and in mercy;
Betroth you to me in faithfulness,
And you shall know Jehovah.'

'On that day,' Jehovah declares,
'I will call out to the heavens,
And they shall call to the earth,
And the earth to the new wine and oil,
And they shall call to Jezreel;
As my seed I will sow him in the land.
I will have pity on the Unpitied,
Say to Not-my-people, "You are my people,"
And they shall say, "Thou art my God."'

167. The Fatal Lack of Religious Education and True Repentance

Hear Jehovah's message, O'men of Israel,
For he has a charge against its inhabitants;
For there is no love nor fidelity,
No knowledge of God in the land;
Only perjury, lying and murder,
Stealing, adultery, violence—
One bloody deed after another!
Therefore the land is in mourning,
All its inhabitants are withering,
Along with the wild beasts and birds,
And the fish of the sea are perishing.

Let no one complain nor find fault,
For my people are like their priestlings.
O priest, you shall stumble by day,
The prophet fall with you by night;
My people are destroyed through ignorance.
Because you rejected knowledge,
I reject you from being my priest.
Because you have forgotten God's law,
I will also forget your children!
As they increased they sinned against me,
Their honor they turned into shame.
They feed on the sin of my people,
Gloating over their guilt!
With priest it shall be as with people,
I will punish him for his acts,
And repay him for his deeds.

They eat but never are satisfied,
Commit adultery but do not increase,
For they have ceased to obey Jehovah.
Wine and adultery rob men of reason:
My people seek oracles from their trees,
And a mere divining rod gives them guidance!

The spirit of adultery leads them astray,
And they are faithless to their God.

I will go and leave them alone,
Till they seek me, admitting their guilt,
And in distress eagerly seek me,
Saying, 'Come, let us turn to Jehovah,
He has torn but he will heal us,
Afflicted us, but he will bind us up,
In a day or two he will revive us,
On the third day restore us to health,
That we may live in his presence.
Let us eagerly strive to know him;
We shall find him when we seek him;
He will come to us like the rain,
Like the spring rain that waters the land.'

O Ephraim, what shall I do to you!
O Judah, what shall I do to you!
Like a morning cloud is your love,
Like the dew which soon melts away.
I have hewn them, therefore, by the prophets,
I have flayed them by the words of my mouth,
And my justice goes forth like light.
Love I desire, not sacrifice,
A knowledge of God, not burnt-offerings.

168. Sowing the Wind and Reaping the Whirlwind

Ephraim mingles with the nations;
Ephraim is like a cake unturned.
Strangers devour his strength, but he knows it not.
His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he knows it not.

Like a silly, stupid dove is Ephraim;
To Egypt they call, to Assyria they go.
Each time they go, I will spread my net for them,
And like wild birds I will catch and bind them.

Woe unto them, for they have strayed from me!
Destruction to them; for they are untrue to me!
Though I wished to save them, they lied against me!
They have never whole-heartedly cried to me!

They have set up their rulers, but without my consent,
They have chosen their leaders, but without my knowledge,
They have fashioned their silver and gold into idols,
But only to court destruction.

For they sow the wind and shall reap the whirlwind!
They are stalk with no shoot and they bear no fruit.
Should they bear fruit, strangers would swallow it.
Even now is Israel swallowed up by the nations!

Behold, as they go to escape destruction,
Egypt shall gather them, Memphis shall bury them,
Nettles possess their treasures of silver,
And thorns grow up in all their tents.

169. The Tenderness and Strength of God's Love

When Israel was a child I loved him,
And from Egypt I called his sons.
But the more I called to them
The more they ran from me.
They kept sacrificing to baals,
And offering incense to images.

Yet it was I who taught them to walk,
Taking them firmly by the arms;
But they did not know it was I who healed them.
I sought to draw them with leading strings,
With bands of love;
I was as one who relieved them of the yoke,
And bending toward them, I gave them food.

Let them return to the land of Egypt,
Let Assyria lord it over them,
For they have refused to turn to me!
And so the sword shall whirl in their cities,
And completely destroy their fortresses,
For my people are bent on rebelling against me,
They call upon Baal with one accord!

O Ephraim, how can I give you up?
How surrender you, O Israel?
How can I make you like Admah,
Or treat you like Zeboim?

My own heart turns against me,
All my sympathies are aroused.
I will not vent my fierce anger,
I will not again destroy Ephraim.
For I am God, and not man,
The Holy One in your midst,
And I will not come to destroy.

170. The Prayer of True Penitence and the Divine Response

O Israel, turn to Jehovah,
For through your guilt you have fallen;
Take with you fitting words,
And return to Jehovah your God.
Say to him: 'Pardon all guilt,
And let us receive what is good,
And repay with the fruit of our lips.

Assyria will not save us;
We cannot ride upon war horses;
No more will we say, "Our gods"
To the idols made by our hands;
For with thee the orphan finds mercy.'

'I, Jehovah, will heal their apostasy,
And I will love them freely,
For my wrath is turned away from them.
I will be as dew unto Israel,
And he shall bloom as the lily.

He shall strike in his roots like the poplar,
His branches shall spread on all sides,
His beauty shall be like the olive,
And his fragrance like Lebanon's cedars.

They shall dwell once again in my shadow,
Revive like a watered garden;
They shall blossom like the vine,
And their scent be as wine of Lebanon.

What more has Ephraim to do with idols!
I will answer and care for him;
I am like an ever green cypress,
It is from me that his fruit comes.'

Who is so wise that he understands this,
So clear-sighted that he knows it?
For Jehovah's ways are straight;
Righteous men walk in them,
But wrong-doers stumble in them.

ISAIAH

THE THINGS WHICH ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ SAW CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM IN THE DAYS OF UZZIAH, JOTHAM, AHAZ, AND HEZEKIAH THE RULERS OF JUDAH

171. The Call of the Young Isaiah

It was in the year that King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Guardian angels stood above him. Each had six wings, one pair to cover the face, another to cover the feet, and another with which to fly. And they cried to one another:

Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts,
The whole earth is full of his glory.

The foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of those who called, and the temple was filled with smoke. Then I said: 'Woe is me! I am ruined; for I am a man with impure lips, and I live among a people with impure lips; for my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts!' But one of the guardian angels flew to me with a hot coal in his hand that he had taken from off the altar, and with it he touched my mouth and said: 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is removed and your sin forgiven.'

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:

Whom shall I send,
And who will go for us?

And I said, 'Here am I; send me.' Then he said: 'Go and say to this people:

Keep on hearing, but without understanding!
Keep on seeing, but without discerning!

Make sluggish the mind of this people,
Make their hearing dull and their eyesight poor,
That they may not see with their eyes nor hear with their ears,
Nor understand with their hearts and be healed once more!'

Then I said, 'How long, O Lord?' And he said:

Until they lie in ruins—
Cities without inhabitant,
Houses without a human being,
And the ground be left a desolation.

172. The Unfruitful Vineyard

Let me sing a song of my friend, I pray,
A love-song regarding his vineyard.
A vineyard on a fertile hill belonged to my friend.
He digged and cleared it of stones and planted vines;
He built in its midst a tower and hewed out a wine-press.
He looked for a yield of good grapes, but it yielded wild ones.

Now, you inhabitants of Jerusalem and you men of Judah,
Judge for yourselves, I pray, between me and my vineyard;
What more remained to be done to my vineyard than that which I did?
Why, when I looked for good grapes, did it yield only wild ones?

So now let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard.
I will take its hedge away, that it may be devoured,
I will break through its fence, that it may be trampled down;
Yes, I will make it a waste, unpruned and unhoed,
And this vineyard shall grow up again to thorns and briers,
And I will command the clouds not to rain upon it.

For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the people of Israel,
And the men of Judah the plantation in which he delighted.
He looked for justice but there was only bloodshed;
For redress, but there was only a cry of distress.

173. The Destroyers of Society

Ah! they who add house to house,
They who join field to field
Till there is no more room, and they live
Alone in the midst of the land!
Therefore Jehovah of hosts has sworn to me:
'Surely many a house shall become a desolation,
Houses great and fair without inhabitant;
For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one measure of wine,
And ten bushels of seed shall yield but one bushel of grain.'

Ah! they who rise at dawn
To go in pursuit of strong drink,
Who stay late in the evening
Till wine completely inflames them,
And lyre and harp and timbrel,
Flute and wine are at their feasts;
But they heed not the work of Jehovah,
Nor see what his hands have made.

My people are exiled,
Exiled for lack of knowledge,
Their nobles are dying of hunger,
The populace parched with thirst.
Therefore the abode of the dead
Increases its ravenous appetite,
And opens its mouth insatiable.
Zion's nobles and rabble go down,
And their pomp and all who rejoice in it.
Lambs shall there find pasture,
And kids feed amid the ruins.

Ah! they who draw guilt on themselves with cords of
folly,
And the punishment of their sin as with wagon ropes!
Who say, 'Let him hasten his work, that we may see it;
Let the purpose of Israel's Holy One draw nigh,
And at last be realized, that we may know it!'

Ah! they who call evil good, and good evil,
Who make darkness light, and light darkness,
Who make bitter sweet, and sweet bitter!

Ah! they who are wise in their own eyes,
And in their own sight prudent!

Ah! they who are mighty in guzzling wine,
And valiant in mixing strong drinks!
Those who for a bribe acquit the guilty,
Who deprive of his right the innocent!

Therefore as flame consumes stubble,
And as hay falls to ash in the flame,
So their root shall become as rottenness,
And their blossom blow off as dust;
For they have despised the teaching of Jehovah of hosts,
And scorned the word of Israel's Holy One.

174. The Penalty for Seeking only Material Wealth and Pomp

Go into the caves of the rock,
Hide yourselves in dusty holes
From the terror of Jehovah,
Away from his glorious majesty,
When he rises to terrify the earth!
For Jehovah has cast off his people,
Abandoned the household of Jacob;
For their land is full of traffickers,
And they bargain with foreigners;
So their land is full of riches,
And there is no end to their treasures.
Their land is full of horses,
And there is no end to their chariots.
Their land is full of idols,
And they worship the work of their hands,
Even that which their fingers have made.
But human pride shall sink low,
And men's loftiness shall be abased,
And Jehovah alone be exalted
On that day.

Go into the caves of the rock,
Hide yourselves in dusty holes
From the terror of Jehovah,
Away from his glorious majesty,
For Jehovah of hosts has a judgment day
Upon everything proud and lofty,
Upon everything high and uplifted,
Upon all the cedars of Lebanon,
And all the oaks of Bashan;
Upon all the towering mountains,
And all the lofty hills;
Upon every lordly tower,
And against every fortified wall;
Upon all the ships of Tarshish,

And all the stately vessels.
So human pride shall sink low,
And men's loftiness shall be abased;
And Jehovah alone be exalted,
But the idols shall one and all vanish.

Because Zion's daughters are haughty,
And walk with outstretched neck,
Casting their wanton glances,
Tripping along as they go,
And shaking the bangles on their feet,
The Lord will afflict with a scab
The scalps of the women of Zion,
And Jehovah will bare their shame.
Instead of perfume shall be rottenness,
Instead of a girdle, a rope,
Instead of curled hair, baldness,
Instead of rich clothing, sackcloth.

Your men shall fall by the sword,
And your valiant warriors in battle.
Zion's gates shall languish and mourn,
She shall sit on the ground despoiled.

Seven women shall take hold
Of a single man on that day,
Saying, 'We will eat our own bread,
We too will provide our own garments,
Only let us bear your name;
Oh, take away our disgrace!'

75. The Fate of the Defiant Exploiters of the People

The Lord sends doom on Jacob,
And it shall fall upon Israel,
And all the people shall know it,
Ephraim, and Samaria's inhabitants,

Who say in their pride and arrogance:
'The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with hewn stone;
Sycomores have been cut down,
But with cedars we will replace them.'
So Jehovah has stirred up their enemies,
And spurred on their foes against them:
On the east the Arameans,
And on the west the Philistines,
Greedily devouring Israel.
Yet his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

The people turned not to him who smote them,
Nor sought favor from the Lord of hosts;
So he cut off from Israel head and tail,
Palm-branch and reed in a single day.
The elder and the dignitary are the head,
And the lying prophet the tail.
The guides of this people mislead them,
And those whom they lead are destroyed;
So the Lord spares not their choice youth,
Nor pities their orphans and widows,
For all are godless and wicked,
And every mouth speaks impiety.
Yet his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

For their wickedness burns like a fire
Which consumes both briers and thorns,
And kindles in forest thickets,
Till they roll up in columns of smoke.
Through Jehovah's wrath the land is ablaze,
And the people, too, are food for the flames.
No one has pity on his fellows;
On the right they cut slices, and yet are hungry,
On the left they devour, and yet are not satisfied.
Each one eats up the other's flesh,

Manasseh Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh,
And both together fall upon Judah.
Yet God's anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

Ah! they who issue iniquitous laws,
The scribblers who only register trouble,
That they may deprive the helpless of justice,
And rob my afflicted ones of their right,
That widows may become their spoil,
And that they may make even orphans their prey!
What will you do on the judgment day,
In the storm which shall come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help,
And where will you leave your wealth,
To avoid crouching under the captives,
And falling under the slain?
Yet his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

He will raise a signal to a distant nation,
And summon it from the end of the earth.
See! quickly, swiftly it will come.
Not one is weary or stumbles,
Not a girdle on their loins is loosed,
Not a thong on their sandals snaps.
Their arrows are sharpened,
Their bows are all bent;
Their horses' hoofs are as flint,
And their wheels are like the whirlwind.
Their roar is like that of a lioness,
Like young lions they roar and growl.
They seize the prey and escape,
And there is none to deliver!

176. The Necessity of Holding Fast in a National Crisis

When it was reported to the house of David that Arameans were encamped in the territory of Ephraim, the heart of Ahaz and of his people trembled as the trees of the forest tremble before the wind.

But Jehovah said to Isaiah: 'Go out with your son Shear-jashub to meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the road to the Fuller's Field, and say to him, "Keep calm; have no fear; do not lose courage because of these two fag ends of smoking firebrands, because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah. For Aram with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah has formed this evil plot against you: Let us march against Judah and terrify and overpower it and set up there as ruler the son of Tabeel."'

But this is what the Lord Jehovah declares:

Their plot shall not succeed.
For the capital of Aram is Damascus,
The ruler of Damascus Rezin,
The capital of Ephraim Samaria,
The ruler of Samaria Remaliah's son!
And Ephraim's power as a nation shall crumble.
But if you do not believe,
You surely shall not be upheld.'

Jehovah spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 'Ask a sign of Jehovah your God; ask that it be performed either in the nether world or in heaven above.' But Ahaz replied, 'I will not ask, nor will I put Jehovah to the test.'

Then Isaiah said, 'Hear now, O house of David; is it not enough for you to exhaust the patience of men,

that you must weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold a young woman will give birth to a child and will name him Immanuel. Curds and honey will be his food until he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know how to reject the bad and choose the good, the land of those kings whom you dread shall be abandoned. Jehovah will also bring upon you and upon your people and upon your family days such as have not been since Ephraim separated from Judah. At that time, if a man shall keep alive a young cow and two milk sheep, then, owing to the abundance of milk which they shall yield, he shall be able to live on curds, for curds and honey shall be the food of all who are left in the land. At that time wherever there used to be a thousand vines, each worth a silver piece, there shall be thorns and briers. Men will go there only with bow and arrows, for all the land shall be a thicket of thorns and briers. And for fear of the thorns and briers, you will not go out on the hills that used to be hoed, but they shall be a cattle-run and a sheep pasture.'

Then Jehovah said to me, 'Take a large tablet and write on it in legible characters:

SWIFT IS THE SPOIL, SPEEDY THE PREY

Also let trustworthy witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, attest the writing for me.'

Then my wife gave birth to a son, and Jehovah said, 'Name him "Swift is the spoil, speedy the prey," for even before the boy knows how to cry, "My father" and "My mother," the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away as plunder by the king of Assyria.'

Jehovah also said to me:

'Because this people reject the gently flowing waters of Shiloah,
And are overwhelmed with fear of Rezin and the son of Remaliah,
I am bringing upon them the mighty and many waters of the Euphrates,
Even the king of Assyria and all his proud hosts;
And it shall rise above all its channels and overflow all its banks,
It shall sweep on into Judah, a rushing flood, reaching up to the neck,
And its outstretching wings shall cover the breadth of your land, O Immanuel.'

Nothing remains but to bind up the evidence and entrust the teaching to the custody of my disciples; and I will wait for Jehovah, who has withdrawn his favor from the house of Jacob, and for him I will eagerly look. See: I and the children whom Jehovah has given me are signs and symbols in Israel from Jehovah of hosts who dwells in Mount Zion.

177. A Patriot's Efforts to Avert a Disastrous Alliance

In the year when the chief military commander sent by Sargon, king of Assyria, came and attacked Ashdod and captured it, Jehovah said, 'Just as my servant Isaiah has gone about half-clad and barefoot three years as a sign and a warning against Egypt and Ethiopia, so the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, half-clad and barefoot, with their bodies exposed. Then those who looked expectantly *and boasted of* Egypt shall be dismayed and shamed.

nd the inhabitants of this coastland shall say at that ime, "If this is the fate of those to whom we looked nd to whom we fled for help to be delivered from the ing of Assyria, how then can we ourselves escape?"'

78. The Fate of Rulers Who Refuse to Listen to Good Counsel

The rulers in Jerusalem stagger with wine and reel with drink,
Priest and prophet stagger with drink, confused with wine,
They reel while they have a vision and totter in rendering decisions.
All tables are full of vomit—filth is in every place!

'To whom' [they say], 'would the prophet teach knowledge and explain the revelation?
To babes just weaned from the milk and drawn from their mothers' breasts?
He is always saying law upon law, law upon law,
Rule upon rule, rule upon rule, a bit here, a bit there!'

Therefore by men of a gibbering speech and foreign accent
Jehovah will surely speak to this people, to whom he has said:
'This is the rest that you should give to those who are weary;
This teaching is what brings true refreshing.' But they would not listen.
So Jehovah's message to them is law upon law, law upon law,
Rule upon rule, rule upon rule, a bit here, a bit there.

Therefore hear Jehovah's message, you scornful men,
You who rule over this people that dwells in Jerusalem:

'Because you have said, "We have entered into a compact with death,
And with the realm of the dead we have made a solemn agreement,
So that when the overwhelming scourge shall come, it shall not reach us,
For we have made lies our refuge and falsehood our hiding place."

Therefore the Lord Jehovah declares:
"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone that is tested,
A precious corner-stone as a firm foundation,
He who believes in me shall not be moved.
Justice I will make the measuring line,
And righteousness the plummet.

But hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,
And waters shall overflow the hiding place;
And your covenant with death shall be annulled,
Your compact with the realm of the dead shall be broken;
When over you passes the overwhelming scourge,
You shall be completely crushed by it."'

179. The Folly of Trusting in Heathen Alliances Rather than God

'Ah, you rebellious sons,' Jehovah declares,
'Who carry out a plan that is not mine,
And conclude a treaty against my wish,
And so add sin to sin!
You go down to Egypt without my advice,
To find refuge in the protection of Pharaoh,
And shelter under the shadow of Egypt.
The protection of Pharaoh shall be your shame,
The shelter under Egypt's shadow your confusion.

Now go, write it down, on tablet or in book inscribe it,
That it may be evidence for all time to come,

That they are an obdurate people, lying children,
Children who will not heed Jehovah's instruction,
Who say to the seers, "See not!"
To the prophets, "Preach not the truth!
Speak to us flattery, prophesying illusions!
Turn from the way, and go aside from the path,
Vex us no more with Israel's Holy One!"

Jehovah, Israel's Holy One, has declared:
'By sitting still and resting you shall be saved,
In quietness and in confidence lies your strength.'
But you refuse and say,
'No, on steeds we will flee!'
Your flight shall therefore be speedy!
And, 'On horses we will ride.'
Your pursuers shall therefore be swift!
A thousand shall flee at the menace of one,
At the menace of five you shall flee
Until you are but a remnant,
Like a pole on a mountain top,
Like a standard set on a hill.

Ah! they who go down to Egypt for help,
Who trust in chariots because they are many,
And in horsemen because they are strong,
But look not to Israel's Holy One
Nor consult Jehovah.
But he too is wise and brings calamity,
And recalls not his words,
He will rise against this wicked nation,
And against the helper of evil-doers.

The Egyptians are men, and not God,
And their horses are flesh, not spirit.
Jehovah will stretch out his hand,
And then the helper shall stumble,
The one helped also shall fall,
And all shall go down together.

180. The Result of Trusting in Men Rather than in Jehovah

Hear, O heavens,
Give heed, O earth!
For Jehovah speaks:
'Children have I reared and brought up,
But they have rebelled against me.
Even an ox knows its owner,
And an ass its master's crib,
But Israel has no knowledge,
My people have no insight.'

Ah! you sinful nation,
People burdened with guilt,
Offspring of evil-doers,
Children that act perversely,
Who have forsaken Jehovah,
And despised Israel's Holy One!
Why continue to be afflicted,
Why do you go on rebelling?

The whole head is sick,
The whole heart diseased,
From head to foot
Is no soundness anywhere;
Only wounds and bruises,
And sores still bleeding,
Not pressed nor bound up,
Nor softened with oil.

Your land is a desolation,
Your cities are burned with fire;
And in your very presence
Aliens are devouring your land,
And the city of Zion is left
Like a little hut in a vineyard,
Like a lodge in a cucumber-field,
Like a city that is besieged.

181. The Remedy for Judah's Ills

Give heed to Jehovah's message, you chieftains of Sodom,
And hear the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah:
'What care I for your many sacrifices?' Jehovah declares.
'I am sated with burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts,
In the blood of oxen and goats I take no delight,
When you come to my temple to worship, who asked this of you?
Trample my courts no more to bring useless gifts;
Abhorrent to me is the smoke of your offerings, your new moons and sabbaths,
I cannot endure the guilt of your sacred assemblies,
I inwardly hate your festivals and set times,
They have become a burden to me that I weary of carrying.

When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes,
When you make many prayers, I will pay no heed,
For your hands are blood-stained; wash yourselves clean,
Remove from my sight your evil deeds.

Only cease to do evil, learn to do good;
Seek out the right, relieve the oppressed;
Do justice to the orphan, plead the cause of the widow.'

'Come now, let us reason together,' Jehovah declares.
'Though your sins be as scarlet, they may become white as snow.
Though red as crimson, they may become as wool.
If willing to obey, you shall eat the best of the land,
But if you refuse and rebel, the sword shall destroy you;
For the mouth of Jehovah has spoken it.'

182. The Doom of Arrogance

Ah! Assyria, the rod of my anger,
The staff that expresses my indignation.
Against a godless nation I send him,
Against the people of my wrath I direct him
To take the spoil and gather the plunder,
To trample them down like the mud of the streets.

But [Assyria] thinks otherwise,
And his mind plans differently;
It is in his heart to destroy,
To exterminate many nations.
For he says: 'Are not all my officers kings?
Is not Calno's fate that of Carchemish?
And Hamath's that of Arpad?
And Samaria's that of Damascus?

By my own strength have I done it,
My own wisdom, for I have discernment.
I have changed the boundaries of nations,
I have plundered what they have stored up,
I have laid low cities and their inhabitants,
My hand has found as a nest
All the riches of the peoples.
As one gathers eggs that are left,
I have gathered in all the earth;
There was none that fluttered a wing,
Or opened the mouth or chirped!'

Shall the axe vaunt itself over him who swings it,
Or the saw lord it over him who wields it,
As if a rod should swing him who lifts it,
Or a staff could lift him who is not wood?

Therefore thus says the Lord Jehovah of hosts:
'O my people who dwell in Zion,
Have no fear of Assyria,

Though he smites you with the rod,
And lifts up his staff against you.'

Behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts,
Will lop off the branches with a terrible crash,
Those grown high will be hewn down,
Those that are lofty will be brought low,
With iron he will strike down the forest thickets,
And Lebanon, with its huge cedars, shall fall,

MICAH

THE MESSAGE WHICH CAME FROM JEHOVAH TO MICAH THE MORASHTITE IN THE DAYS OF HEZEKIAH

183. A Countryman's Condemnation of the Crimes of the City

Hear this, peoples all, and give heed,
O earth, and its inhabitants,
For before you Jehovah will testify,
The Lord from his holy temple.

See, he comes down from his place,
He treads upon the heights of the earth;
The mountains are melting beneath him,
Like wax in the presence of fire;
And the valleys break apart,
Like water poured over a precipice.

For the guilt of Jacob is all this,
And for the sin of the house of Judah.
What is Jacob's guilt?
Is it not Samaria?
What is Judah's sin?
Is it not Jerusalem?

So Jehovah has made Samaria a ruin,
A place where a vineyard is planted.
Poured down her stones into the valley,
And laid her foundations bare.

For this I will wail and lament,
I will go barefoot and naked,
I will raise a wailing like jackals,

And mourn like the ostriches.
For Samaria's wound is incurable,
The peril comes even to Judah,
It reaches the gate of my people,
Even unto Jerusalem!

Tell it not in Gath!
In Giloh exult not!
In Bochim weep bitterly!
In Beth-aphrah roll in the dust!
For ruin is descending from Jehovah
On the gates of Jerusalem.

Hark! Jehovah calls to the city!
Hear, O tribe and council of the city,
Whose rich men are given to deeds of violence,
And whose citizens speak only falsehood:
'Can I forget the riches in the house of the wicked,
And the accursed scant measure?
Or condone the wicked balances,
And the bag of short weights?

'I indeed have begun to crush you,
To destroy you because of your sins.
You shall eat, but not be satisfied,
You shall store away, but not save,
You shall sow, but shall reap nothing,
Press out olives, but not anoint yourself,
And make new wine, but drink none of it!

'For you follow the statutes of Omri,
The policy of the house of Ahab.
You have lived in accord with their counsels,
I must give you up, therefore, to ruin,
Your inhabitants to derision.'

184. False and True Religion

Woe to those who plan mischief,
And plot evil upon their beds!
When morning dawns they carry it out,
For it is in their power to do so!

They covet fields and seize them,
Houses, and carry them off;
So they crush both household and householder,
A man and his inheritance.

Therefore Jehovah declares:
'See, I am planning disaster,
Which you cannot remove from your necks,
So that you can walk erect,
For this is a time of calamity!'

'Do not keep harping on such things,' they urge,
'No disgrace can come to the house of Jacob.
Is Jehovah impatient, or are these his doings?
Are not his words kindly to his people Israel?'

But you have become my people's foe;
You attack those who are peaceful,
You strip the cloak from peaceful travellers,
Unwilling to resist!

You drive the women of my people
Out of their pleasant homes;
You take away my glory
From their young children forever.
By saying, "Rise and be gone,
For this is no place to rest."'

Hear, you leaders of Jacob,
And rulers of the nation Israel.
Ought you not to know justice,
You who hate good and love evil?

They devour the flesh of my people,
And strip their skin from off them,
They lay bare their bones and break them,
Like meat for the pot or the caldron!

Then they will cry to Jehovah,
But no answer will he give them;
He will hide his face from them,
Because they commit such crimes.

Jehovah declares concerning the prophets
Who lead my people astray,
Who, when well fed, proclaim peace,
But a holy war on one who fills not their mouths:

'Night shall fall upon you with no vision,
And darkness with no divination.
The sun shall set upon these prophets,
For them the light of day shall be darkened.'

Then shall the seers be ashamed,
The diviners be covered with disgrace.
They all shall refrain from speech,
Because God gives them no answer.

But verily I am full of power,
And am given justice and strength,
To declare to Jacob his guilt,
To tell to Israel his sin.

Hear this, you leaders of Jacob,
And rulers of the nation Israel,
You to whom justice is loathsome,
You perverters of all that is right!

You who build Zion by bloodshed
And fill Jerusalem with crime!
Her leaders judge for a bribe,
Her priests give decisions for hire,

Her prophets divine for money!
Yet they lean on Jehovah, saying,
'Is Jehovah not on our side?
No calamity can befall us.'

Therefore, because of you,
Zion shall be ploughed as a field,
Jerusalem shall become a ruin,
The temple mount an overgrown hill.

With what shall I come before Jehovah,
And bow before the God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,
And with calves but one year old?

Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams,
And with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give him my first-born to atone for my guilt,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

It has been shown you, O man,
What Jehovah desires of you:
To do justice, and to love mercy,
To walk humbly with your God.

185. Universal Peace Based on Justice

It shall come to pass in future days,
That the site of Jehovah's house
Will be established on the mountain tops,
Exalted above the hills.
People shall come streaming to it,
Many nations shall come and say:

'Let us go up to Jehovah's mount,
To the house of the God of Jacob,
That he may instruct us in his ways,
That we may walk in his paths.

For instruction goes forth from Zion,
And the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.'

He shall judge between many peoples,
Make decisions for mighty nations;
They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation shall not lift sword against nation,
Nor shall they learn war any longer.
But under his own vine each shall dwell,
Under his own fig-tree, with none to terrify them;
For the mouth of Jehovah of hosts has spoken.

And thou, Beth Ephrathah,
The smallest of Judah's clans,
From you shall come forth for me
One who shall rule over Israel;
And his origin is from of old,
From ages long past.

He shall stand and feed the flock
In the strength of the Lord his God,
In the exalted name of Jehovah;
They shall abide, for he shall be great
Even to the ends of the earth.

ZEPHANIAH

186. The Judgment Threatening Guilty Judah

Jehovah declares:
I will sweep away everything from the face of the land,
Man and beast, the wild birds and the fish of the sea;
I will cause the wicked to stumble, and cut off man
from the land.

I will stretch out my hand against Judah and the dwellers in Jerusalem,
And cut off from this place the last remnant of Baalism
and the name of the idol-priests,
And those who bow on the housetops to the host of
heaven,
Those who bow to Jehovah, but swear by Milcom,
And those who have turned back from following Jehovah,
Those who have not sought Jehovah, nor inquired of
him.

Silence before Jehovah! for Jehovah's day is near;
Jehovah has prepared the feast, has bidden the guests.
Hark! a cry from the Fish Gate, and a howl from the
New Town,
A mighty din from the hills and a wail from the Mortar;
For the merchants are all destroyed, the wealthy cut off.

At that time I will search Jerusalem with a torch,
And will punish those at ease, thickening upon their
lees,
Who say to themselves, 'Jehovah will do no good nor
harm.'
Their wealth will become booty, and their houses a
desolation.

Near is Jehovah's great day, near and coming fast;
The sound of Jehovah's day is as painful as when warriors shriek.
That day is a day of wrath, a day of stress and anguish,
A day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and fog, a day of blare and battle-cry
Against the fortified cities, against the lofty battlements.

I will bring distress upon men, they shall walk as the blind,
Their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh like dung.
Neither their silver nor gold will suffice to deliver them
On the day of the wrath of Jehovah, when his jealousy is aroused.
The whole land shall be consumed, when he completely destroys it,
And he will make a frightful end of all its inhabitants.

NAHUM

AN ORACLE CONCERNING NINEVEH

187. The Fate of the Pitiless Destroyer of Nations

The destroyer has come up against you;
Mount guard upon the rampart;
Watch the road; brace your loins;
Strengthen your might to the utmost.

The shields of his warriors are dyed red,
His soldiers are clothed in scarlet,
His chariots gleam like fire
On the day he prepares for battle.

Chariots rush across the fields,
Plunge about in the open places;
They look like flaming torches,
As lightning they dart to and fro.

They speed on toward the wall;
The storming-shield is set up,
The water-gates are thrown open,
And the palace dissolves in ruins.

Like a pool of water is Nineveh,
Her waters fast ebbing away.
'Stand firm! stand firm!' one cries,
But not a man turns back.

She is empty, desolate, devastated,
With faint heart and knocking knee;
There is weakness in every limb,
And the faces of all are livid.

Where now is the den of lions,
Where now the lair of their young,
Where the lion was wont to withdraw,
And his cubs, with none to disturb them?

The lion tore enough for his cubs,
And strangled the prey for his lionesses;
He filled his caves with booty,
He filled his lairs with spoil.

'But behold, I am against you,'
Jehovah of hosts declares,
'I will burn up your chariots in smoke,
The sword shall devour your young,
I will cut off your spoil from the earth,
No more shall your messengers be heard.'

Woe to the bloody city!
Full of lies and plunder,
Without end is the spoil.
Hear the crack of the whip,
Hear the rattle of wheels,
Galloping horses,
Jolting chariots,
Horsemen charging,
Swords flashing,
Spears glittering,
A multitude of slain,
A heap of carcasses;
No end to the corpses
Over which men stumble!

'Behold, I am against you,'
Jehovah of hosts declares,
'I will lift up your skirts before you,
And show the nations your nakedness,
And the kingdoms your shame.

'I will cast loathsome filth upon you,
And make you an object of contempt,
So that every one who sees you
Shall flee from you and say:
"Nineveh is laid waste;
Who will mourn for her?"'

Are you any better than Thebes,
Which stood on the banks of the Nile,
With waters around as a rampart,
Whose wall was the sea of waters?
Her strength was Ethiopia and Egypt;
The Libyans were her helpers,
And Put with countless people,
Yet she was exiled and made captive.
On all corners of the streets
Her infants were dashed to pieces.
For her honored ones men cast lots,
All her great ones were bound in chains.

You too, O Nineveh, shall be drunken, you shall be faint;
You too shall seek a place of escape from the foe.
All your fortresses are fig-trees with the first ripe figs;
If but shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater!
Your people are weak as women to face your foes;
The gates of your land are wide open; your defenses burned down.
Ah! how your shepherds slumber, your nobles sleep!
Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them!
There is no healing for your hurt, your wound is incurable.
All who hear of your fate loudly clap their hands.

JEREMIAH

THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH THE SON OF HILKIAH, ONE OF THE PRIESTS WHO LIVED IN ANATHOTH IN THE TERRITORY OF BENJAMIN, TO WHOM A MESSAGE CAME FROM JEHOVAH IN THE THIRTEENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

188. The Beginning of a Heroic Life Work

This was the message which came to me from Jehovah: 'Before I formed you in your mother's womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. I have appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.' But I said: 'O Lord Jehovah! I do not know how to speak in public, for I am only a youth.' Then Jehovah said to me: 'Do not say, "I am only a youth," for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to protect you.'

Then Jehovah stretched out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me: 'See, I have put my words in your mouth, and I have appointed you this day over the nations and kingdoms, to tear up and break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.'

Again this message came from Jehovah, 'What do you see?' I answered, 'A caldron brewing hot, and it faces from the north.' Then Jehovah said to me: 'From the north disaster is brewing for all the inhabitants of the land. For I am about to summon all the kingdoms from the north, and they shall come and each set up his throne at the entrance to the gates of

Jerusalem and around all its walls and against all the cities of Judah. And I will pass judgment upon them for all their wickedness, for they have been disloyal to me and offered sacrifices to other gods and have worshipped that which their own hands have made.

Therefore prepare for action, rise, proclaim to them all that I command you. Do not be afraid of them (lest I make you afraid in their presence), for see, I myself will make you this day like a fortified city and like a bronze wall against the rulers of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the common people. Though they fight against you, they will not overcome you, for I am with you to protect you.'

189. The Divine Appeal to a Guilty Nation

Jehovah said:

I remember the devotion of your youth, the love of your bridal days,
How you followed me in the wilderness, in a land uncultivated;
Israel was sacred to Jehovah, the first fruits his earth produced,
All who devoured it paid the penalty, calamity overtook them.

What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me,
And followed false gods and became like them instead of saying,
'Where is Jehovah who brought us up from the land of Egypt,
Who led us through the wilderness, with its steppes and ravines,
Who led us through a land that is parched and barren,
A land through which no one passes, where no man lives?'

I brought you to a fertile land, to eat its good fruits;
You entered it, defiled my land, and made loathsome
my heritage.
The priests did not inquire, 'Where is Jehovah?'
The guardians of law did not know me, the rulers were
untrue.
And the prophets prophesied by Baal and followed gods
that help not.

Has a heathen nation ever changed its gods, though
they are not gods?
Yet my people have changed their glory for that which
brings no help.
Be astounded at this, O heavens, shudder exceedingly,
For they have committed two crimes, Jehovah declares,
They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,
To hew for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no
water!

But I had thought, 'How gladly would I place you
among my sons,
And give you a pleasant land, as a heritage most beauti-
ful!'
And I said, 'You will call me father and never will you
leave me.'
But as a woman is faithless to her lover, so you have
been to me.

From the bare heights in the wilderness a sirocco comes
toward my people,
Not a wind to winnow nor cleanse the grain—it is far
too strong for that!
See, it mounts up like the clouds, its chariots are like the
whirlwind,
Its horses are swifter than eagles; woe to us! we are
ruined!
For hark! news comes from Dan, from Mount Ephraim
telling of evil:

'Tell it among the nations; report it to Jerusalem.
Robber bands are coming from a far distant land.
They are raising their cry against the cities of Judah,
Lying in wait in the field, on every side against her.'

'Since you have rebelled against me,' thus Jehovah declares.
'These things are brought upon you by your acts and your conduct.
This is your calamity; it indeed is bitter, for it touches your very heart.

'Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, see and know,
And seek in its open spaces, if you can find a man;
If any did right and sought after the truth, I would pardon them.
But each of them, from the least to the greatest, greedily robs,
And each of them, from prophet to priest, practises fraud.
They heal the wound of my people as though it were slight,
And say, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

'Return, O apostate Israel, to me,' says Jehovah.
'No more will I frown upon you, for indeed I am merciful,
Only acknowledge your guilt, for you have sinned against Jehovah,
And truly I will not retain my wrath forever and ever.'

190. The Essentials of True Worship

The command that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, 'Stand in the door of the temple and proclaim this message: "Hear the word of Jehovah, all you people of Judah who enter these gates to worship him. Jeho-

vah the God of Israel declares: Reform your ways and your deeds and I will let you dwell in this place. Trust not in misleading words, thinking, This is the temple of Jehovah. For if you really reform your ways and your deeds, if you faithfully execute justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the resident alien, the fatherless nor the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place nor follow other gods to your injury, then I will let you remain in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever.

"But now you are trusting in misleading words that are useless. Will you steal, murder and commit adultery, swear falsely and offer sacrifice to Baal, and follow other gods whom you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house which bears my name and say, We are free to do all these shameful acts? Is this my house, which bears my name, in your eyes a den of robbers? I myself have seen it," Jehovah declares.

"Then go to my sanctuary which was at Shiloh, which I caused to bear my name at first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. Now because you have done all these deeds, and have not heeded, although I spoke to you earnestly and often; and have not answered, although I called you, I will do to the temple which bears my name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, what I did to Shiloh; and I will banish you from my sight, as I have banished your kinsmen, even all the Northern Israelites."'

191. Facing Martyrdom Undisturbed

When Jeremiah had finished speaking all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak to the people, the

priests and prophets seized him and said, 'You must die. Why have you declared in the name of Jehovah that this temple shall be like Shiloh and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitants?' And all the people were gathered about Jeremiah in the temple of Jehovah.

But when the public officials of Judah heard of these things, they came up from the royal palace to the temple of Jehovah and held court at the entrance, at the new gate of the temple. Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to the people, 'This man should be put to death, for he has prophesied against this city as you have heard with your own ears.' But Jeremiah answered the officials and all the people, 'It was Jehovah who sent me to prophesy against this temple and city all that you have heard. Now therefore reform your ways and your acts and listen to Jehovah your God; and he will suspend the evil sentence that he has pronounced against you. But as for me, see, I am in your power; do to me as you think right and proper. Only be assured that, if you put me to death, you will bring upon yourselves and upon this city and upon its inhabitants guilt for shedding innocent blood, for Jehovah has indeed sent me to you to tell you all these things.'

Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and to the prophets, 'This man does not deserve to die, for he has spoken to us in the name of Jehovah our God.' Certain of the elders of the land arose and said to the assembly of the people, 'Micah the Morashtite prophesied in the days when Hezekiah ruled over Judah, and said to the people of Judah, "Jehovah of hosts declares:

Zion shall be ploughed as a field,
Jerusalem shall become a ruin,
The temple-mount an overgrown hill."

'Did Hezekiah and the people of Judah put him to death? Did they not rather fear Jehovah and placate him, so that he suspended the evil sentence that he had pronounced? But we are in danger of doing great harm to ourselves?'

Ahikam the son of Shaphan also defended Jeremiah, so that they did not turn him over to the people to be put to death.

192. The Bad Son of a Good Father

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness,
and his roof-chambers by injustice;
Who makes his neighbor labor without wages, and gives
him no pay;
Who says, 'I will build myself a vast palace with spacious chambers,
With deep-cut windows, all ceiled with cedar and painted
with vermillion.'

'Will you reign as ruler because you excel in cedar?
Did your father not eat and drink and render justice
impartially?
He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was
well.
Is not this the evidence that one knows me?' says Jehovah.
'But your eyes and heart are bent only on dishonest gain,
On shedding innocent blood, on oppression and violence!'

Therefore Jehovah declares concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, the ruler of Judah:

They shall not lament over him, 'O my brother,' or
'O my sister!'
They shall not bewail for him, 'O lord!' or 'O how
glorious he was!'
He shall be buried as an ass is buried, drawn out and
cast forth!

193. The Fate of Jeremiah's Sermons

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah the following message came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, 'Take a parchment roll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you regarding Jerusalem and Judah and all the nations from the time of Josiah to the present. Perhaps the people of Judah will pay attention to all the misfortune which I purpose to bring upon them, so that they will turn each from his evil course, that I may forgive their guilt and sin.'

Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote on a parchment roll at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words which Jehovah had spoken to him. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, 'I am prevented from going to the temple of Jehovah. Therefore you go and read in the temple on the fast day the words of Jehovah from the roll which you have written at my dictation. You shall read them to all the people of Judah who have come from their towns. Perhaps they will implore Jehovah's favor and each turn from his evil course; for Jehovah has expressed great anger and wrath against this people.' So Baruch did as Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the temple from the writing the message of Jehovah.

Also in the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim's reign, when all the people who had come to Jerusalem from the cities of Judah were observing a fast in the temple courts, Baruch read to them all from the writing the words of Jeremiah. When Micaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard all the words of Jehovah, he went down to the chancellor's room, in the palace, where all the court officials were sitting, and told them all that he had

heard when Baruch read the book to the people. Then all the nobles sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah to Baruch to say: 'Take the roll from which you have read to all the people and come here.' So Baruch took the roll in his hand and went to them. Then they said to him, 'Sit down now and read it to us.' So Baruch read it to them. But when they had heard all, they turned in alarm to one another and said to Baruch, 'We must surely tell Jehoiakim all this.' So they asked Baruch, 'Tell us now: how did you write all this?' Baruch answered, 'Jeremiah dictated it all to me and I wrote it down in ink.' Then the nobles said to Baruch, 'Go, hide both yourself and Jeremiah, and let no one know where you are.' But after they had deposited the roll in the room of Elishama the chancellor, they went to Jehoiakim's apartment, and reported all these facts to him. Then he sent Jehudi to bring the roll, and he brought it out of the room of Elishama the chancellor. And Jehudi read it to him and to all the officials who were in attendance.

Now Jehoiakim was sitting in the winter house with a brazier burning before him. When Jehudi had read three or four double columns, Jehoiakim cut it with a paper-knife and threw it into the fire that was on the brazier, and the entire roll was burned up; but neither he nor any of his servants who were present were disturbed or tore their garments. Moreover, although Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah begged Jehoiakim not to burn the roll, he would not listen to them. He also ordered Jerahmeel his son and Seraiah the son of Azriel and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but Jehovah kept them concealed.

Then Jeremiah took another roll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, who wrote on it at the dictation of

Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim the ruler of Judah had burned in the fire; and many other similar words were added.

194. A Prophet's Prayer for His People's Pardon

My sorrow is incurable, my heart is faint within me.
The cry of my people sounds from a distant land.
'Is not Jehovah in Zion? Is not her King within her?'
Why have they vexed me with their images, with their foreign vanities?
The harvest is past, the summer ended, and we are not saved!

Though our sins bear witness against us, Jehovah, act for thy name's sake;
For we have often been disloyal; we have sinned against thee.
O thou hope of Israel, its savior in time of trouble,
Why art thou as a stranger here, a traveller who stays but a night?
Why art thou as one asleep, as a warrior who cannot save?
Yet thou, O Jehovah, art in our midst and we bear thy name; leave us not!

Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Dost thou loathe Zion?
Why hast thou smitten us, so that there is no healing for us?
We looked for peace, but no good came,
For a time of healing, but there is only terror!

We acknowledge, Jehovah, our wickedness and the guilt of our fathers;
For we have sinned against thee; but do not abhor us,

For the sake of thy name despise not the throne of thy glory;
Remember us and break not thy covenant with us.

195. The Prophet's Doubts and Jehovah's Assurances

Too righteous art thou, Jehovah,
For me to contend with thee,
Yet before thee would I lay my case:
Why do the wicked prosper?
Why are those who act treacherously at ease?
Thou didst plant them, and they have taken root,
They grow and bring forth fruit;
On their lips thou art ever present,
But far from their innermost thoughts.

If you have run with the footman,
And even they have wearied you!
Then how can you vie with horses?
If in a land of peace you lose faith,
In the Jordan jungle, what will you do?

Thou hast deceived me, O Jehovah, and I let myself be deceived;
Thou art stronger than I, and therefore thou hast prevailed;
I have become a constant object of derision, every one mocks me.
For as often as I speak I must cry out; I must cry out, 'Violence and spoil!'
Jehovah's message is to me a constant reproach and derision.

If I say, 'I will not think of it nor speak any more in his name,'
Then there is in my heart a burning fire, shut up in my bones.
I am weary of enduring, I can no longer bear it;

For I hear the whispers of many, terror on every side:
'Denounce, and we will denounce him,' say my fair-weather friends,
And those who wait for my fall, 'Perhaps he can be deceived,
And we shall overcome him and take our revenge on him.'

O Jehovah, thou knowest; remember and care for me,
Avenge me of my persecutors, restrain thy wrath no longer.
Know that for thy sake I have suffered reproach from those who despise thy words.
Destroy them, and thy word shall be to me a source of joy,
And my heart shall rejoice because I bear thy name, O Jehovah.

I have not sat in the assembly of those who make merry, nor have I rejoiced;
I sat alone because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with indignation.
Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?
Wilt thou be to me like a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?

Therefore thus saith Jehovah,
'If you turn to me I will restore you that you may stand before me.
And if you remove the noble from the vile you shall be my spokesman,
And you I will make an impassable wall of brass,
They shall fight against you, but they shall not overcome you,
For I am with you to save you and deliver you;
I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked,
And redeem you from the clutch of the terrible.

196. The Arraignment of a Nation's Faithless Religious Leaders

My heart within me is broken, all my bones relax;
I am like a drunken man, as one overcome by wine,
'For both prophet and priest are shamefully corrupt.
Even in my temple have I found their wickedness,'
Jehovah declares.
They say to those who despise me, "You shall have peace."
To all who follow their own stubborn hearts, "No evil shall come to you."

'I have not sent the prophets, yet they have run!
I have not spoken to them, yet they have prophesied!
If they had stood in my council and heeded my words,
They would have restrained my people from doing evil.

'Am I not a god near by and not a god afar off?
Can any one hide himself in secret places and I not see him?
Do not I fill both heaven and earth?' Jehovah declares.
'I have heard what these prophets have said
Who prophesy falsely in my name, saying, "I have had a dream."
How long shall there be a message in the mouths of these false prophets
Who proclaim the deceit in their own minds to make my people forget my law
By their dreams which they recount each to his neighbor,
Just as their fathers forgot my name for Baal?

'The prophet who has a dream, let him recount his dream;
And he who has my word, let him speak my word faithfully.
What has the straw to do with the wheat?' Jehovah declares,
'Is not my word like a fire, like a hammer which shatters the rocks?'

197. The Fidelity of the Rechabites

This message came to Jeremiah from Jehovah while Jehoiakim ruled over Judah: 'Go to the home of the Rechabites and bring them into Jehovah's temple, into one of the halls, and give them wine to drink.'

Then I took Jazaniah and his brothers and his sons and all the Rechabites and brought them into Jehovah's temple into the hall of the sons of Johanan, and I set before them bowls full of wine and cups and said, 'Drink wine.'

But they answered: 'We drink no wine, for Jonadab our father commanded us: "Neither you nor your sons shall ever drink wine; you shall not build a house nor sow seed nor possess a vineyard; but all your days you shall reside in tents, that you may live long in the land in which you dwell as aliens." And we have obediently done as Jonadab our forefather commanded us. But when Nebuchadrezzar invaded the land, we said: "Come, let us go to Jerusalem from the advancing armies of the Chaldeans and the Arameans." So we are living in Jerusalem.'

Then this message came to me from Jehovah: 'Go and say to the men of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem: "Will you not learn how one should listen to my words? For while the descendants of Jonadab the son of Rechab have carried out the command of their forefather, this people has not listened to me." Therefore Jehovah declares: "I am about to bring upon Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem all the calamity that I have pronounced against them."'

Therefore Jehovah declares: 'Because the descendants of Jonadab the son of Rechab have been obedient and have obeyed their father, they shall never lack a man to serve me as long as the earth stands.'

198. A Letter to Homesick Exiles

This is the letter which the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the elders of the exiles, to the priests, to the prophets, and to all the people by Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah whom Zedekiah the ruler of Judah sent to Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon:

'Jehovah the God of Israel says to the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem: "Build houses and dwell in them and plant gardens and eat the fruit from them. Marry and let your sons and daughters marry, that you may increase rather than grow less. Also work for the prosperity of the land where I have sent you into exile and pray to Jehovah in its behalf, for your own prosperity depends upon its prosperity." Jehovah also commands: "Let not the prophets who are among you deceive you, and pay no attention to the dreams which they dream. For they prophesy falsely in my name, and I have not authorized them."

'Jehovah declares, "After seventy years of Babylonian rule have passed, I will remember you and fulfil my promises to you by bringing you back to this place. For I cherish plans for your prosperity and not for evil, that I may give you a future and a hope. Pray to me and I will hear you; seek me and you shall find me; if you search for me with all your heart, I will reveal myself."'

199. Jehovah's Eagerness to Restore His Afflicted People

Jehovah declares:

Once in the wilderness I found a people escaped from the sword;
When Israel went to seek rest, from afar I, Jehovah, appeared to him.
I have loved you with love everlasting; with tender love I have led you.

Again I will build you up and you shall be built, virgin Israel;
You shall deck yourself with timbrels and go out in the merry dances.
Again shall you plant vineyards on the hilltops of Samaria,
The planters shall plant and enjoy the fruit, and praise Jehovah;
For the day is coming when the watchman shall cry on the hills of Ephraim:
'Arise, and let us go up to Zion to Jehovah our God.'

Then they shall come and sing on Mount Zion and rejoice in Jehovah's goodness,
Over the grain, the new wine, the oil, and the young of the flock and the herd;
Their soul shall be as a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more.
Then shall the maidens rejoice in the dance, the young men and the old together;
For I will turn their mourning into joy, and make them happy instead of sad.

A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children; she refuses comfort for they are no more.

Refrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears;
For your work shall be rewarded, and they shall return from the hostile land,
There is hope for your future, and your children shall return.

I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning his lot:
'Thou hast chastened me and I bore it like a calf untaught.
Restore me that I may return, for thou art Jehovah my God!
For after my chastening I have repented, I smite my breast,
I am shamed and humbled, for I bear the disgrace of my youthful folly.'

Is not Ephraim my dear son, my darling child,
So that as oft as I speak of him, I remember him still?
Therefore my heart yearns for him, I must be merciful to him.

200. The New Era That Is to Come

'Behold, the days are coming,' Jehovah declares,
'When I will sow Israel and Judah with man and beast.
As once I watched over them to tear down and afflict,
So then will I watch over them to build up and plant.

'In those days they shall never say again:
"The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge."
But the teeth of him who eats them shall be set on edge.'

'Behold, the days are coming,' Jehovah declares,
'When I will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah,

Not like the covenant which I once made with their fathers,
When I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt—
For they themselves broke my covenant, and I rejected them—
But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel:
In the latter days,' Jehovah declares,
'I will put my teaching in their breast; on their heart I will write it;
And I will be their God and they shall be my people.
And they shall teach no longer, every man his neighbor,
Nor each one teach his brother, saying, "Know Jehovah,"
For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest;
For I will forgive their wrongdoing and remember their sins no more.'

EZEKIEL

201. Ezekiel's Vision of Jehovah

While I was among the Jewish captives beside the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. And as I looked I saw a storm wind coming from the north, a huge cloud surrounded by brightness and shot through with fire; and from the midst of the fire something gleamed like shining metal. From the midst of the storm cloud appeared the forms of four living creatures. This was their appearance: they had the form of a man, but each had four faces and four wings; their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. They shone like polished bronze. Under their wings on the four sides were human hands, and the wings of each touched each other; each went straight forward, without turning his face. All four had in front the face of a man, on the right the face of a lion, on the left the face of a bull, and behind the face of an eagle. Their wings were separated above, the one from the other; each pair of wings was joined together, and one pair of wings covered the upper part of the body. Each went straight forward as the spirit impelled him to go, and they did not turn as they advanced. In the midst of the living creatures was what appeared like glowing coals of fire, like torches; and it moved up and down among the living creatures, and the fire gleamed, and from it lightning flashed forth. And as the living creatures moved to and fro, their movements had the effect of lightning.

Over the heads of the creatures was a vaulted ex-

panse, which appeared like crystal, stretching out over their heads. And I heard the sound of their wings as the sound of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, the sound of tumult, like the sound of a multitude. And when they stood still they folded their wings.

Above the vaulted expanse, which was over their heads, was an appearance like sapphire, in the form of a throne. Seated on the throne was a form which resembled a man. From what seemed to be his loins, above and below, I saw what appeared like fire. And there was a bright light around him, like the bow which appears in a cloud on a rainy day. It was the visible likeness of the glory of Jehovah.

202. A Prophet's Responsibility

When I saw the vision of Jehovah, I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking to me. And he said to me:

'Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you.' A spirit entered into me as he spoke and made me stand on my feet. Then I heard the one who addressed me, and he said to me, 'Son of man, I send you to the Israelites who have rebelled against me. But do not be afraid either of them or of their words, though you are surrounded by briers and thorns and are living among scorpions. Do not be afraid of their words nor dismayed at their looks; for they are a rebellious people.'

Then a spirit lifted me up and took me away and I went in great excitement, for the hand of Jehovah was strong upon me, and I came to the captives at Tel-Abib, who lived by the Chebar canal, and I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days.

At the end of seven days this message came to me from Jehovah: 'Son of man, I appoint you a watchman to the house of Israel. When you hear a message from my mouth, you shall give them the warning from me. When I say to a wicked man, "You shall surely die"; if you do not warn him, that he may turn from his wicked course so as to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his guilt; but I will hold you responsible for his death. If you warn a wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness nor from his evil course, he shall die guilty; but you are absolved of your responsibility. Again, when an upright man turns from his upright course and does wrong, and I bring about his downfall, he shall die. Because you have not given him warning he shall die in his sin, for his righteous deeds shall not be remembered; but I will hold you responsible for his death. But if you warn the man not to sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live, for he heeded the warning; and you have saved yourself.'

203. The Law of Individual Responsibility

This message also came to me from Jehovah: 'What do you mean by using this proverb in the land of Israel:

> The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
> And the children's teeth are set on edge?

'As surely as I live,' said Jehovah, 'you must never again use this proverb in Israel. All souls are mine: the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine. Only the one who sins shall die.

'But if a man is upright and does what is just and honorable, if he does not join in the heathen feasts

upon the hilltops, nor worship the idols of the Israelites, nor defile his neighbor's wife, nor approach a woman in her impurity, nor wrong any one; if he restores to the debtor his pledge, takes nothing through robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and clothes the naked, does not demand interest on a loan nor exact usury, keeps his hand from doing wrong, renders just decisions between man and man, and follows my commands, he is upright; he shall live,' Jehovah declares.

'The one who sins shall die. A son shall not be responsible for his father's guilt, nor a father for his son's guilt. The integrity of the upright man shall be to his credit, and the guilt of the wicked to his discredit. If a wicked man repents of all his sins which he has committed and keeps all my laws and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the good deeds which he has done shall be forgotten; because he has done right he shall live. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?' Jehovah declares. 'If he turns from his evil course, shall he not live?'

204. Sorrow Consecrated to Service

This message came to me from Jehovah: 'Son of man, I am about to take from you in an instant the object of your affection, yet you must not mourn nor weep nor shed tears. Sigh in silence, but make no public mourning for the dead. Put your turban on your head and your sandals on your feet, do not cover your beard, nor eat the food that one does when mourning.'

So I addressed the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died; and on the next day I did as I was commanded. Then the people said to me, 'Will

you not tell us why you act in this way?' I said to them, 'This word of Jehovah came to me: "Say to the people of Israel, Jehovah declares: I am about to defile my sanctuary, the pride of your strength, the delight of your eyes, and your soul's desire. Your remaining sons and your daughters shall be killed by the sword. You shall then do as I have done; you shall not cover your beard nor eat the food that men eat when mourning; your turbans shall remain on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You shall not weep, but you will pine away because of your crimes, and you will moan among yourselves. Ezekiel shall be an example to you. When the calamity comes, you shall do as he has done. Then you shall know that I am Jehovah."

"As for you, O son of man, on the day that I take from them their strength, the proud joy and delight of their eyes, their soul's desire, their sons and their daughters, a fugitive shall come to you to inform you. On that day you shall be free to speak to the fugitive; you shall speak and no longer be silent, and you shall be an example to them that they may know that I am Jehovah."'

205. Jehovah the Shepherd of His Flock

This word also came to me from Jehovah: 'Son of man, prophesy concerning the shepherds of Israel, and say to them, "The Lord Jehovah declares: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who have fed only themselves. Should not shepherds feed the flock? You have eaten the fat and clothed yourselves with the wool, you have killed the beasts, but you have not fed my flock. You have not given strength to the weak, you have not healed the sick; you have neither bound up the crippled, nor brought back that which was driven away;

you have not sought the lost, but you have ruled them tyrannically and harshly. So my sheep have been scattered because there was no shepherd and have become food for wild beasts of every kind. My flock has wandered on every mountain and high hill, and my sheep have been scattered throughout the earth with none to search nor seek for them.

"But I myself will seek for my sheep and find them. As a shepherd searches for his flock on the day when his sheep are scattered so I will search for my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered in the day of clouds and darkness, and bring them into their own land. Then they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasturage on the hilltops of Israel. I myself will shepherd my sheep, and I will make them lie down," the Lord Jehovah declares. "I will seek the lost, I will bring back what was driven away, I will bind up the crippled, I will restore strength to the sick, and, overthrowing the strong, I will with justice shepherd my sheep.

"I will also place one shepherd over them, even my servant David, and he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God and my servant David prince among them; I, Jehovah, have spoken. I will send down showers of rain in its season, and there shall be showers of blessing. They too shall know that I am Jehovah their God, and that they, the nation Israel, are my people," Jehovah declares."

206. A Vision of National Revival

The power of Jehovah took possession of me, and he led me forth by his spirit and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then he had me pass around about them; and they were very

many on the surface of the valley, and they were exceedingly dry. He said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones be revived?' I answered, 'O Lord Jehovah, thou knowest.' Again he said to me, 'Speak to these bones, and say to them, "Dry bones, hear the message of Jehovah. I am about to put breath into you, that you may revive. I will lay sinews upon you, clothe you with flesh, cover you with skin, and put breath in you, that you may live again and know that I am Jehovah."'

So I spoke as he commanded me; and as I spoke there was a movement; the bones came together, each into its place; and as I looked sinews came upon them and flesh clothed them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Son of man, speak to the breath, and say, "Jehovah commands: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."' So I called as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'O man, these bones represent all the people of Israel; they say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; we are completely cut off." Therefore prophesy and say to them, "Jehovah declares: I will open your graves and raise you from them, O my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel. Then, O my people, you shall know that I am Jehovah. And I will put my spirit in you, that you may live, and I will restore you to your own land, that you may know that I, Jehovah, have decreed and accomplished it," Jehovah declares.'

HABAKKUK

207. The Consequences of Right and Wrong Doing

Art thou not eternal, O Jehovah,
My holy One, who diest not,
With eyes too pure to see evil,
Who canst not look on iniquity?
Why regardest thou the treacherous in silence,
While the wicked swallows the upright?

He treats men like the fish of the sea,
Like reptiles that have no ruler,
He sweeps them all into his net,
And gathers them into his seine.
Shall he empty his net continually,
To slaughter nations unpityingly?

I will take my stand on my watch-tower,
And station myself on a turret.
I will watch to see what he will say to me,
What answer he will make to my complaint.

Then Jehovah answered me and said:
'Inscribe the vision plainly on tablets,
That even he who runs may read it.
Though the vision waits for the time set,
It hastens to fulfilment and will not fail;
Though it linger long, wait for it,
For it surely will come and not tarry.
The soul of the wicked faints within him,
But the upright lives by his faithfulness.

'Woe to him who amasses what is not his,
And loads himself down with pledges!
Will your debtors not suddenly rise,

And those who shall overthrow you awake,
And you become their prey?
For as you have spoiled many peoples,
The survivors shall prey upon you.

'Woe to him who gets false gain,
And stores up evil for his house,
To set his nest on high,
To be safe from the grip of misfortune!
You have planned only shame for your house,
You have cut off many peoples,
And brought guilt upon yourself;
For the stone shall cry out from the wall,
And the beam from the timber shall answer it.

'Woe to him who builds a city by bloodshed,
And founds a town by crime,
While the peoples toil for what fires shall consume,
And the nations weary themselves for nothing!

'Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor
From the cup of your wrath till he be drunk,
That you may gaze on his nakedness!
You are filled with shame, not glory;
Drink yourself and be uncovered,
The cup from Jehovah's hand
Shall pass in turn to you,
And shame shall cover your glory!'

208. Faith Undaunted by Disaster and Misfortune

I have heard, O Jehovah, of thy fame,
I have seen, O Jehovah, thy work;
Through the years thou dost make thyself known,
In wrath thou rememberest mercy.

Art thou wroth, O Jehovah, with the rivers,
Is thine anger against the streams,

Or thy wrath against the sea,
That thou dost ride on thy war-steeds,
That thou mountest thy chariots of victory,
That thou makest bare thy bow,
That thou fillest thy quiver with shafts?

Thou cleavest the earth with torrents,
The mountains see thee and writhe,
The tempest of waters sweeps by,
The great deep sends forth its voice,
The height lifts up its hands,
The sun forgets to rise,
The moon stands still in its place.

Thine arrows go forth to give light,
Thy glittering spear is as lightning.
In rage thou stridest over the earth,
In wrath thou tramplest the nations.
Thou goest forth to save thy people,
Thou goest to help thine anointed.

I heard, and my body trembles,
And at the sound my lips quiver,
My bones begin to decay,
And my footsteps totter beneath me,
While I wait for the day of distress
To come upon those who attack us.

Though the fig-tree bears no fruit,
And there be no vintage on the vines,
Though the olive harvest fails,
And the fields produce no food,
Though the flock be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls,
Yet I will exult in Jehovah,
And rejoice in the God who saves me,
Jehovah the Lord is my strength;
He makes my feet like hinds' feet,
And causes me to walk on the heights!

ISAIAH

209. The Vision of a God-Sent Ruler

The people walking in darkness
Have seen a great light,
They who live in the shadow of death—
Upon them a light has shone.

Thou hast given them much cause for joy,
Thou hast made the rejoicing great;
They rejoice as at harvest before thee,
As men exult when dividing the spoil.

For the burdensome yoke,
And the bar on his shoulder,
His taskmaster's rod
Thou hast shattered as thou didst the Midianites.

For each boot worn in battle's din,
Each cloak drenched with blood
Shall be burned completely
As fuel for the flame.

For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given;
The rule shall rest on his shoulders,
And this shall be his name:

'Wonderful Counsellor,
Godlike Hero,
Father for ever,
Prince of Peace.'

Great his rule,
And endless the peace,
On the throne of David,

Throughout his realm,
To establish and uphold it
By justice and uprightness,
Henceforth and forever—
The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will do this.

210. A Just Ruler and the Effect of His Rule

A sprout shall spring from the stock of Jesse,
And out of his roots a shoot shall bear fruit.
Jehovah's spirit shall rest upon him:
A spirit of wisdom and insight,
A spirit of counsel and might,
A spirit of knowledge and reverence.

He will not judge by sight only,
Nor render decisions on hearsay,
But will justly judge the helpless,
And with equity decide for the needy.
By his rebuke he will smite the ruthless,
By his breath he will slay the wicked.
The girdle on his loins will be righteousness,
And the band on his waist faithfulness.

Then the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard lie down with the kid;
The lion eat straw like the ox,
The calf and young lion graze together,
And a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall be friends,
And their young shall lie down together.
The nursling shall play on the hole of the asp,
And the young child put his hand on the den of the viper.

Men shall do no harm nor destruction
Throughout all my holy mountain;
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah,
Even as the waters cover the sea.

211. True Democracy

Behold, a ruler shall rule uprightly,
And officials also govern justly.
Each shall be as a shelter from the wind,
Like a hiding-place from the driving storm,
Like streams of water in ground that is dry,
Like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

The eyes of those who can see shall not be closed,
And the ears of those who can hear shall be attentive;
The mind of the impetuous shall understand knowledge,
And the tongues of stammerers shall speak without halting.

No more shall the ignoble be called noble,
Nor the knave be hailed as princely.
For the ignoble speaks ignobly,
And his mind plans villainy,
To do what is impious,
To speak error regarding Jehovah,
To keep the hungry soul empty,
To withhold drink from the thirsty.
But the noble man makes noble plans,
By his noble acts shall he stand.

When the spirit is poured upon us from on high,
The wilderness shall become a fruitful field,
And a fruitful field be considered but a forest.
Then in the wilderness justice shall dwell,
And righteousness in the fruitful field.
The fruit of righteousness shall be peace,
And the effect of justice shall be security.

212. The Overthrow of Autocratic Might

Hark, on the hills is a tumult, as of a mighty multitude;
Hark, an uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathering together,

Jehovah of hosts himself is mustering the martial host.
They are coming from a distant land, from the very end of heaven,
Jehovah and the agents of his wrath, to destroy the entire earth.

Babylon, most beautiful of kingdoms, the pride of the Chaldeans,
Shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah after God overthrew them,
Uninhabited forever, deserted from age to age;
No nomad shall there pitch his tent, no shepherds fold their flocks.
But wild cats shall lie there, their houses shall be full of jackals;
Ostriches shall live there, and satyrs too shall dance there,
Howling beasts shall cry to each other in its windows,
And wolves shall bay to each other in its revelling halls;
Its time is near, its days shall not be prolonged.

How still the oppressor has become, the terror ceased!
Jehovah has broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of tyrants,
That smote the peoples in fury, with stroke unceasing,
That trampled down nations in anger, with trampling unchecked!
All the earth is at rest and peace, they break out in glad songs.

Even pine trees exult over you, and the cedars of Lebanon:
'Now that you have lain down, no woodman comes up against us.'

The abode of the dead is stirred to hail your coming,
Arousing for you the shades, all the leaders of earth,
Making rise up from their thrones all the kings of the nations,

They shall all of them make answer, and say to you:
'You, too, are as weak as we, and become like us!
Your majesty is flung into the grave, and the melody of your harps;
Corruption is spread out beneath you, and your covering is worms.'

'How you have fallen from heaven, radiant son of the dawn!
How you are struck down to the ground, prostrate upon corpses!
Yet you have said in your heart, "I will mount to the heavens,
Above the stars of God I will exalt my throne,
I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the recesses of the north,
I will rise above the lofty cloud banks, and be like the Most High."

'Yet you shall be brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit!'

213. Jehovah the Rock of Ages

Thou keepest the steadfast mind in peace,
For in thee it trusts.
Trust in Jehovah forever,
For he is the Rock of Ages.

With my soul I desire thee in the night,
With my spirit I long for thee in the morning;
For when thy judgments appear on earth,
The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

As a woman about to give birth to a child
Writhes and cries out in her pain,
So were we, O Jehovah, in thy presence.

We travailed, we writhed in pain,
But we have, as it were, given birth to nothing;
We have wrought no deliverance for the land,
And no inhabitants of the world have been born.

But thy dead shall live,
Their bodies rise again.
They who dwell in the dust shall awake and sing,
For thy dew is a light-giving dew,
And the earth shall cast forth the dead.

214. Jehovah Strong to Deliver

Woe to you, spoiler, although you have not been spoiled,
You treacherous one whom no one has deceived!
When you have ceased spoiling you shall be despoiled,
And ended your deceiving, you shall be deceived!

Jehovah, be gracious to us, for we wait for thee;
Be thou our arm of strength every morning,
Our deliverance also in time of stress.
When thy voice sounds, the peoples flee,
When thou dost arise, the nations scatter.

The sinners in Zion are afraid,
Trembling has seized the impious.
'Who among us can dwell with devouring fire?
Who among us can live with everlasting flames?'

He who lives uprightly and speaks the truth,
He who despises gain won through extortion,
Who keeps his hands from accepting a bribe,
Who closes his ears against bloody plans,
And shuts his eyes against wrong-doing.
That one shall live on the heights,
The rocky fastnesses shall be his retreat;
His bread shall be prepared,
His water shall be assured.

Your eyes shall see the King in his beauty;
They shall look upon a far-stretching land.
Your mind shall muse on the terror of the past:
'Where is he who kept the records,
Where is he who weighed the spoil?
Where is he who counted the towers?'
You shall see no more the insolent people,
The people of obscure, unintelligible speech,
Who speak a barbarous, meaningless tongue.

Look at Zion, the city
Where we gather for the feasts,
Your eyes shall see Jerusalem.
A quiet habitation,
A tent immovable,
Whose pegs shall never be drawn,
Nor its cords ever be broken.
But there we have a Glorious One, Jehovah,
Instead of broad, encircling streams,
No fleet with oars can enter it,
Nor can stately ships pass by it.

For Jehovah is our Judge!
Jehovah is our Commander!
Jehovah is our King!
He it is who will save us.

215. The Restoration of Jehovah's Exiled People

'Comfort, oh comfort my people,' says your God,
'Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her,
That her service is ended, her guilt expiated,
That she has received from Jehovah double for all her sins.'

Hark! one calls: 'In the wilderness clear the way of Jehovah,
Make straight in the very desert a highway for our God!

Let every mountain and hill sink down, every valley be uplifted,
Let the steep places be made level and the rough ridges a plain.
The glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all men shall see it,
For the mouth of Jehovah has spoken it.'

Hark! one says, 'Proclaim!' and I said, 'What shall I proclaim?'
'All flesh is grass and all its beauty like a flower of the field.
Grass withers, the flower fades, when Jehovah's breath blows upon it,
Grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.'

Ascend a high mountain, Zion's herald of good news,
Lift aloud your voice, Jerusalem's herald of good news,
Lift it up fearlessly, say to Judah's cities: 'Behold your God!'

Behold Jehovah comes with power and maintaining his rule;
Behold, his reward is with him and his recompense before him;
As a shepherd he will tend his flock, with his arm he will gather it,
The lambs in his bosom he will bear, the mothers he will lead.

216. Jehovah's Infinite Power to Save

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
And ruled off the heavens with a span,
Or enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure,
And weighed the mountains in scales,
And the hills in a balance?

Who has directed the spirit of Jehovah,
And as his counsellor advised him?
With whom has he consulted for enlightenment,
To be instructed in the right,
And be shown the way of true insight?

Lo the nations! as a drop from the bucket,
And as dust on a balance are they reckoned.
Lo the isles! as a mote he uplifts,
And Lebanon is not enough for fuel,
Nor its wild beasts for a burnt-offering.
All the nations are as nothing before him,
They are reckoned as nought and nothingness.

To whom then will you liken God,
With what likeness represent him?
An image! a craftsman casts it,
A goldsmith overlays it with gold,
And a silversmith moulds silver chains.
The one too poor to do this
Chooses an undecayed tree,
Seeks for himself a skilled craftsman
To set up an image that will not totter!

Do you not know? Do you not hear?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not known from the founding of earth?
It is he enthroned above the circle of the earth,
So that its inhabitants are as locusts,
Who stretches out the heavens as a thin veil,
And spreads them out like a habitable tent.

It is he who brings princes to nought,
The rulers of the earth he makes as nothing.
Scarcely have they been planted or sown,
Scarcely has their stock taken root,
When he blows upon them and they wither,
A whirlwind scatters them like chaff.

'To whom then will you liken me,
As my equal?' says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high
And see. Who created these?
He who brings out their host by number,
And calls each by its name;
Of the many mighty and strong,
Not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob:
And declare, O Israel:
'My life is hid from Jehovah,
And my right ignored by my God?'
Have you not known or heard?
Jehovah the everlasting God,
The creator of the ends of the earth,
Faints not, neither is weary,
His insight no one can fathom;
To the fainting he imparts vigor,
To the powerless he gives strength.
Young men may faint and grow weary,
And the strongest youths may stumble,
But they who trust in Jehovah
Ever renew their vigor;
They mount up on pinions like eagles,
They run but never grow weary,
Go forward but never grow faint.

217. The Work and Methods of Jehovah's True Servant

O Israel, my servant
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
Offspring of Abraham, my friend,
Whom I brought from the ends of the earth,
And called from its most distant parts;
To whom I said, 'You are my servant,
I have chosen and have not rejected you,'

Fear not, for I am your God.
I will strengthen, yes, I will help you,
And uphold you with my trusty hand.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
My chosen, in whom I take delight;
I indeed have put my spirit upon him,
That to the nations he may dispense justice.

He will not shout nor cry aloud,
Nor let his voice be heard in the street.
A broken reed he will not crush,
And a flickering wick he will not quench.

Faithfully will he dispense justice;
He will not falter nor will he run,
Until he establishes justice on earth,
And for his teaching the coastlands wait.

This is the message of the one God, Jehovah,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread out the earth and all its products,
Who gives breath to its inhabitants,
And spirit to those who walk upon it:
'I, Jehovah, have called you in righteousness,
Taken you by the hand and kept you,
Given you as a pledge to the people,
As a light to the heathen nations,
To open eyes that are blind,
To bring captives out of confinement,
And the dwellers in darkness from prison.'

218. Jehovah's Care for His People

You who are deaf hear,
You blind look that you may see;
Who is blind but my servant,
And who as deaf as my messenger?

You have seen much without observing,
Though your ears were open, you heard not.

Jehovah was pleased for his righteousness' sake
To make his teaching great and glorious:
Yet it is a people preyed upon and plundered,
All of them are trapped in holes,
And hidden in prison houses,
They are preyed upon, with none to rescue,
Plundered, with none to say, 'Restore.'
Who among you will give heed to this,
Will attend and hear for time to come?
Who gave up Jacob to plunderers,
And Israel to those who robbed him,
And poured out upon him hot anger,
And the fierce violence of battle?
It set him all afire, but he knew it not,
And it scorched him, but he paid no heed.

And now Jehovah declares,
He who created and formed you, O Jacob,
'Fear not, O Israel, for I have redeemed you,
I have called you by name, and you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you,
Through the rivers, they shall not overflow you;
When you go through the fire, you shall not be burned,
Neither shall the flame scorch you.

'For I am Jehovah, your God,
The Holy One, your deliverer;
I have given Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my eyes,
Are honored, and I love you,
I will give men in exchange for you,
And peoples for your life.

'Fear not, for I am with you,
From the East I will bring your offspring,

And from the West I will gather you;
I will say to the North, "Give up!"
And to the South, "Hold not back!
Bring my sons from afar,
And my daughters from the end of the earth,
Every one who bears my name,
Whom for my glory I have created and formed."'

219. Responsibility of God's People to be His Witnesses

'You are my witnesses,' Jehovah declares,
'And my servant, whom I have chosen,
That you may know and believe in me;
And perceive that I am ever the same.
Before me no God was formed,
Nor shall there be after me.

'I, even I, am Jehovah,
And besides me there is no deliverer.
I announced and brought deliverance,
When no other god was among you;
So you are my witnesses,' Jehovah declares.
'I am God, evermore the same,
And there is none who can snatch from my hand;
When I do a thing, who can reverse it?

'Fear not, my servant Jacob,
My upright one, whom I have chosen.
I will pour on the thirsty land water,
And streams upon the dry ground.
I will pour out my spirit on your children,
And my blessing upon your descendants,
So that they shall spring up as grass,
As willows by running streams.
One man shall say, "I am Jehovah's,"
Another shall call himself "Jacob,"
Another on his hand will write "Jehovah's,"
And receive the surname "Israel."

'Truth has gone forth from my mouth,
A word that shall not be recalled,
That to me every knee shall bow,
And every tongue shall swear!
"In Jehovah alone," shall they say,
"I have righteousness and strength."'

220. The World-Wide Mission of Jehovah's Servant

Hearken to me, O coastlands,
And listen, distant peoples.
Jehovah has called me from the womb,
Before I was born he mentioned my name.
He made my mouth like a sharp-edged sword,
In the shadow of his hand he hid me,
He made me a polished arrow,
In his quiver he concealed me,
And he said, 'You are Israel, my servant,
Israel, through whom I will be glorified.'

But I said, 'I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing,
Yet my right is with Jehovah,
My reward is with my God.'

And now Jehovah declares
(He who formed me from birth to be his servant,
To bring Jacob back to himself,
That Israel might be gathered to him;
For I was honored in his sight,
And my God became my strength):
'It is too little a thing to be my servant,
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
To restore the survivors of Israel;
So I make you a light to the nations,
That my salvation may reach to earth's ends.

This is the message of Jehovah,
The Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One,
To the one despised by man,
To the one abhorred by the people,
To him who is servant of rulers:

'Kings shall see and arise,
Princes and they shall do homage,
Because of Jehovah the faithful,
Israel's Holy One who has chosen you.

'At an acceptable time I will respond to you,
On a day of deliverance help you,
Give you as a pledge to the people,
To restore the ruined land,
To allot the desolate heritages,
Saying to prisoners, "Go free,"
To those in darkness, "Show yourselves!"

'They shall pasture along all highways,
On every height find pasturage;
They shall neither be hungry nor thirsty,
Nor shall hot wind or sun afflict them,
For he who pities shall lead them,
And to gushing springs will he guide them.
I will make all the hilltops a highway,
And lofty roads shall be built.'

'Behold, these come from afar,
And these from the north and west,
And these from southern Egypt.
Sing, O heavens, be joyful O earth!
Let the mountains break out in singing,
For Jehovah has comforted his people,
And will show mercy to those afflicted.'

221. The Training of Jehovah's Faithful Servant

The Lord Jehovah has given me the tongue of a trained disciple,
That I may know how to give the fainting a word of help.
Each morning he wakens my ear to listen as a disciple,
And I have not been rebellious nor turned back wilfully.

My back I gave to the smiters and my cheek to those who plucked out my hair,
I did not hide my face from either shame or insult,
For my Lord Jehovah is my helper; therefore I am not confounded.
I have set my face like flint, and I know I shall not be ashamed.

My vindicator is near; who will contend with me? Let us stand up together!
Who will make a charge against me? Let him come near me!
The Lord Jehovah is my helper; who shall condemn me?
They shall all fall to pieces like a garment, the moth shall devour them.

Who of you reveres Jehovah? Let him listen to the voice of his servant;
Though he lives in deep darkness and has no light,
Let him trust in the name of Jehovah and rely on his God.

222. The Future Appreciation of Jehovah's Heroic Servant

Behold, my servant shall prosper,
Be raised up and exalted on high;
For as many were appalled at him,
[So they shall now be amazed].

He shall startle many nations,
Kings will close their mouths before him,
When they see what has never been told them,
And perceive what they never have heard.

Who could believe what we have heard,
And to whom was Jehovah's might revealed?
For he grew up before us as a sapling,
And as a root out of dry ground.

He had no form that we should regard him,
Nor beauty of face that we should delight in him.
His face was more disfigured than any man's,
And his form than any human being's.

He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows, acquainted with sickness;
And as one from whom men hide their face,
He was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely our sicknesses he bore,
And our sorrows he carried;
Yet we regarded him as stricken,
Smitten by God and afflicted.

But he was wounded because of our sins.
And crushed because of our misdeeds;
Chastisement for our well-being fell upon him,
Through the blows inflicted on him we were healed.

All of us like sheep had gone astray,
We had turned each to his own way;
While Jehovah let fall upon him
The guilt of all of us.

Yet when afflicted, he bore it humbly;
Like a lamb led to the slaughter,
As a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
So he opened not his mouth.

Debarred from justice, he was taken away,
Yet who of his generation realized
That he had been cut off from the land of the living,
Had been stricken because of my people's sin?

They made his grave with the wicked,
And his tomb with those who did wrong,
Although he had done no violence,
Nor was any deceit in his mouth.

My servant shall make many righteous,
He himself shall bear their iniquities;
Therefore I will give him a portion with the great,
And he shall divide spoil with the mighty,
Because he poured out his life-blood,
And let himself be numbered with wrong-doers;
For he bore the sins of many,
And for wrong-doers he interposed.

223. The Restoration of Jehovah's Faithful People

Awake, awake! Put on thy strength, O Zion!
Clothe you with your garments of beauty, Jerusalem, the Holy City!
For never again shall come to you the heathen and unclean.
Shake off the dust, arise, O captive Jerusalem,
Loose from your neck the bands, O captive daughter of Zion!
For thus Jehovah declares, 'You were sold for nought,
And so without money you shall be redeemed!'
How beautiful on the hilltops are the feet of him who brings good news,
Of him who announces peace and prosperity and proclaims deliverance,
Who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'
Hark! your watchmen cry aloud, together they sing,
For they see with their own eyes Jehovah restoring Zion.

Break forth with song together, O ruins of Jerusalem.
For Jehovah has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.
Jehovah has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations,
And all the ends of the earth shall see the deliverance of our God.

For as a wife abandoned and broken-hearted Jehovah calls you;
'A wife of one's youth—can she be rejected?' says your God.
'For a short moment I abandoned you, but with great affection will take you back.
In a burst of wrath I hid my face from you for an instant,
But with everlasting love will I show mercy to you,' declares your Redeemer.

'For as I swore to Noah that the waters should never again flood the earth,
So I swear that I will not be angry with you nor will I rebuke you.
Though the mountains should depart and though the hills be shaken,
My love shall not depart from you nor my promise of prosperity be shaken.'
Thus says Jehovah, who has compassion on you.

224. The Invitation to Share the Divine Blessings

Ho! every one who thirsts, come to the waters,
And he who has no money come!
Buy and eat without money,
Why spend money for what is not food,
Give your earnings for that which satisfies not?
Listen to me and eat what is good,
And enjoy the fat of the earth.

Give careful heed and come to me,
Hear, that you may have life indeed;
For with you I will make a lasting compact,
Even the favors assured to David.
As once I made him a witness to the peoples,
A prince and a commander of nations,
So you too shall call a nation you know not,
And a nation that knows you not shall run to you,
For the sake of Jehovah your God,
Israel's Holy One, for he has honored you.

Seek Jehovah while he may be found,
Call upon him while he is yet near,
Let the guilty give up his wrong-doing,
The wicked, as well, his base purposes;
Let them turn to Jehovah and he will pity them,
And to our God, who will generously pardon.
'For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways my ways,' Jehovah declares,
'For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are my ways higher than your ways,
And my thoughts than your thoughts.

'For as rain and snow come down from heaven,
And do not return there, until they have watered the earth,
And made it sprout and bear fruit,
Giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth:
It will not return to me fruitless,
Until it has done what I desire,
And accomplished that for which I sent it.'

For with joy shall you go out,
And in peace shall you be led forth;
The mountains will break out before you into song,
And all the trees of the field clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree,

Instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree;
And it shall be a memorial to Jehovah,
A monument eternal and imperishable.

225. The Joys Awaiting Jehovah's People

Arise, shine, for your light is come!
And the glory of Jehovah has risen upon you.
For though the darkness covers the earth,
And murky darkness the peoples,
Over you Jehovah shines,
Over you his glory appears.
Nations shall come to your light
And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Look around about you and see:
All of them gather and come to you,
From afar come your sons,
And your daughters are tenderly borne.
Then you shall see and be radiant,
And your heart shall thrill and throb,
For the wealth of the sea shall be bestowed on you,
And the riches of the nations shall come to you.

Instead of being forsaken,
And hated with none passing through you,
I will make you an object of pride forever,
A joy to all generations.
You shall drain the milk of the nations,
Even breasts of kings shall you suck,
You shall know that I am Jehovah your Deliverer,
And that your Redeemer is the mighty One of Jacob!

Instead of brass I will bring gold,
Instead of iron I will bring silver,
Instead of timber, brass,
And instead of stones, iron.
I will make prosperity rule over you

And righteousness dominate you.
Violence shall no more be heard in your land,
Nor desolation nor ruin within your borders;
But you shall call your walls, 'Deliverance,'
And your gates, 'Renown.'

No longer shall the sun be your light by day,
Nor the moon shed its bright beams upon you;
But Jehovah shall be your everlasting light,
And your God shall be your glory.
Your sun shall no more go down,
And your moon shall no more wane;
For Jehovah shall be your everlasting light,
And your days of mourning shall be ended.

226. The Joyous Task of Jehovah's True Prophet

The spirit of Jehovah is upon me,
Because Jehovah has commissioned me,
Sent me to bring good news to the afflicted,
To bind up the broken-hearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And freedom to those who are bound;
To proclaim his year of favor,
And the day of vengeance of God;
To give them a fair head-dress for ashes,
Oil of joy for a garment of mourning,
A song instead of a broken spirit,
That they may be called oaks of righteousness,
The planting of Jehovah that he may be honored.

Because their shame was double,
And abuse was the lot they inherited,
They shall now have in their land a double inheritance,
Everlasting joy shall be theirs,
For I, Jehovah, love justice,
I hate unjust robbery:

Faithfully will I give them their reward,
And I will make with them an eternal compact;
Their descendants shall be known among nations,
Their children in the midst of the peoples.
All who see them shall acknowledge them
As a race which Jehovah has blessed.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
For Jerusalem's sake I will not be still;
Till her vindication goes forth as a light,
And her deliverance as a burning torch.
Then nations shall see your vindication,
And all kings your glory;
And you shall receive a new name,
Which the mouth of Jehovah shall determine;
And you shall be a beautiful crown in Jehovah's hand,
A royal diadem in the hand of your God.

227. All Peoples to Share in the Worship of Jehovah

Jehovah declares: 'Keep the law and do what is right;
For my deliverance is near at hand and my righteousness about to be revealed.
Happy the man who does this, the mortal who is loyal to it,
Who keeps the sabbath so as not to profane it, and his hand from doing wrong.

'Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to Jehovah say,
"Jehovah will surely separate me from his people."
And let not the eunuch say, "I am indeed a dry tree."'
For Jehovah says to the eunuchs: 'Those who keep my sabbaths,
And choose to do what pleases me, and are loyal to their covenant with me,
I will give in my temple and on my walls a memorial,

And a name better than that of sons and daughters,
I will give them a name which shall be eternal and imperishable.

'The foreigners, too, who join themselves to Jehovah to serve him,
And to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants,
Every one who keeps the sabbath so as not to pollute it and is loyal to his covenant with me,
Them will I bring to my holy mountain and make joyful in my house of prayer;
Their burnt-offerings and sacrifices will be accepted upon my altar,
For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.'

At that time Jehovah will make himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah and worship him with sacrifice and cereal offering and make vows to Jehovah and perform them. At that time there shall be a broad highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians shall go to Egypt, and the Egyptians to Assyria; and the Assyrians shall worship with the Egyptians. At that time Israel shall be, together with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the earth which Jehovah of hosts has blessed, saying: 'Blessed be my people Egypt and the Assyrians whom I have created and Israel my people of old.'

228. The Conditions of Fellowship with Jehovah

The High and Lofty One declares,
He who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy:
'I dwell on high as the Holy One
With him who is contrite and humble in spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,

And to revive the heart of the contrite.
For I will not contend forever,
Nor be wroth continually,
For man's spirit would faint before me,
Even the souls which I have made.

'Because of his sin I was wroth for a moment,
And I smote him while I hid my face in wrath,
For he rebelliously followed his own inclinations,
And I saw the way he was going.
But now I will heal him and give him rest,
And reward him with consolations,
And create a spirit of thankfulness instead of mourning.
Peace, peace to far and near,'
Jehovah declares, 'And I will heal him;
But the wicked are like the tossing, restless sea,
For it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and filth,
There is no rest,' my God declares, 'for the wicked.'

229. False and True Worship

Cry aloud, and be not silent,
Like a trumpet lift up your voice,
Make known to my people their wrong-doing,
And to the house of Jacob their sin.
Yet they consult me daily,
Their chief joy is to know my will,
As a nation that has done what is right,
Nor forsaken the law of its God!
They consult me for judicial decisions,
The worship of God is their delight!
'Why have we fasted, and thou seest not,
Afflicted ourselves, but thou payest no heed?'
On your fast day you pursue your own business,
You exact interest for all money loaned,
You fast for strife and contention,
And to smite the poor with the fist!
Your fasting at present is not such
As to make your petition heard on high.

Is this the fast which I choose,
A day for a man to afflict himself?
To bow down one's head like a bulrush,
And to grovel in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this then a fast,
A day acceptable to Jehovah?

Is not this the fast that I choose:
To loose the fetters of injustice,
To undo the bonds of violence,
To set free those crushed by debt,
And to tear off every yoke;
To share your bread with the hungry,
And to bring the homeless to your home?
When you see the naked, to cover him,
And not hide yourself from your kinsmen?

Then shall your light break forth as the dawn,
Your restoration quickly spring forth,
And your righteousness go before you,
The glory of Jehovah shall be your rear-guard;
Then when you call, Jehovah will answer,
When you cry out he will say, 'Here am I.'
If from your midst you remove the yoke,
The finger of scorn and malicious speech,
And bestow your bread on the hungry,
And satisfy the soul that is afflicted,
Then your light shall rise in darkness,
And your gloom shall be as noonday,
Jehovah will lead you continually,
And will satisfy your soul in times of drought,
And your strength will he renew.
You shall be like a watered garden,
As a fountain whose waters fail not.
Your descendants shall rebuild the old ruins,
You shall rear the foundations laid by many generations,
And be called 'The Repairer of the Breach,
The Restorer of Ruins to dwell in.'

ZECHARIAH

230. The Coming of the Prince of Peace

Rejoice greatly, O city of Zion!
Shout joyfully, O Jerusalem!
Behold your king will come to you;
Vindicated and victorious is he,
Yet humble, riding upon an ass,
Even upon the colt of an ass.

He shall destroy the chariots from Ephraim,
And horses from Jerusalem;
The battle-bow shall also be destroyed,
And he shall proclaim peace to the nations;
His rule shall be from sea to sea,
From the Euphrates to the ends of the earth.

MALACHI

231. The Divine Disapproval of Divorce

Have we not all one father?
Has not one God created us?
Why deal we treacherously with each other,
Breaking the compact made by our fathers?

And this you also do:
You cover the altar of Jehovah with tears,
So he no longer looks on your offering favorably,
Nor receives it acceptably from your hand.
Yet you say, 'Why is this?'
It is because Jehovah has been a witness
Between you and the wife of your youth,
To whom you have been untrue,
Though she is your companion and wedded wife.

Therefore guard your impulses,
And let no one be untrue to the wife of his youth;
'For I hate divorce,'
Jehovah, the God of Israel, declares,
'And the man who violates his marriage vow.'
So guard your impulses and be not untrue.

232. The Priestly Service that Jehovah Desires

You have wearied Jehovah with your words.
Yet you say, 'How have we wearied him?'
In that you say, 'All who do wrong
Are good in the sight of Jehovah,
And with them he is greatly pleased;
Or where is the God of justice?'

Behold, I will send my messenger,
To prepare the way before me;
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to his temple;
Who can face then the day of his coming?
Who shall stand when he appears?
For he will be like a refiner's fire,
And like fullers' lyes;
He will sit as refiner and purifier,
Purifying the priests of Levi,
And as gold and silver refining them.
Then as upright men they shall present the offerings,
And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to me,
As in the days of old, as in former years.

I pledged the priest life and peace,
I gave them to him that he should revere me.
He revered me and stood in awe of my name.
True instruction came from his mouth,
And untruth was not found on his lips;
He lived an upright life in harmony with me,
And turned many away from wrong-doing.
For the priest's lips should be a storehouse of knowledge,
And men should seek the law from his mouth;
For he is a messenger of Jehovah of hosts.

233. The Rewards of Faithful Service

'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse,
That there may be provision in my house;
And test me in this way,' says Jehovah of hosts,
'And see if I will not open for you the windows of heaven,
And pour out for you a blessing, until there is more than enough.
I will rebuke for your sakes the devourer,
That he destroy not the fruits of your ground;
Your vines shall not fail to ripen their fruit,

And all nations shall call you happy,
For you shall be a delightful land,' says Jehovah of hosts.

Jehovah declares, 'Your words have been too hard upon me,
Yet you say, "What have we said against thee?"
You have said, "It is useless to serve God,
And what gain is it to us that we have obeyed him,
And that we have walked as mourners before him?
As it is, those who do wrong thrive,
Yes, they defy God and escape!"

Then those who revered Jehovah spoke to one another,
So that Jehovah gave heed, and heard,
And a book of remembrance was written before him,
Regarding those who revered him and honored his name.
And Jehovah of hosts declared, 'They shall be mine
On the day that I gather together my special treasures.
And I will show them tender consideration,
As a man does toward his son who serves him.
Then you shall again distinguish between the upright and the wicked,
Between him who serves God and him who serves him not.

'For the day is coming that shall burn as a furnace,
When all the proud and all wrong-doers shall be stubble,
And the day that is coming shall set them ablaze,
So that there shall be left of them neither root nor branch;
But to you who revere my name there shall arise
The sun of righteousness with healing on its wings,
And you shall go forth and leap with joy like calves let loose,
And you shall trample down the wicked,
For they shall be as ashes under your feet,
On the day on which I act,' Jehovah of hosts declares.

'Behold I send you Elijah the prophet,
Before the coming of the great and terrible day of Jehovah;
And he will bring the older and younger generations into harmony,
Lest I come and utterly destroy the land.'

JOEL

234. The Spiritual Experiences in Store for the Penitent

This is the message of Jehovah:
'Turn to me whole-heartedly,
And with fasting and weeping and mourning.
Rend your hearts and not your garments,
And turn to Jehovah your God;
For indeed he is gracious and merciful,
Patient and abounding in love,
And he relents of the evil he would send.

'Then you shall eat your food and be satisfied,
And praise the name of Jehovah your God,
Who has treated you so wondrously;
And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
That I, Jehovah, am your God and none other,
And my people shall never again be ashamed.

'Afterward I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind;
Your sons and your daughters shall speak in ecstasy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions,
And even on your male and female slaves
In those days I will pour out my spirit.'

JONAH

235. The Folly and Impiety of Narrow Patriotism

This message from Jehovah came to Jonah the son of Amittai: 'Arise, go to that great city, Nineveh, and preach against it; for their wickedness is known to me.' But Jonah started to flee to Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare and embarked to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah.

But Jehovah made a furious wind descend upon the sea, and there was such a great storm that the ship was in danger of breaking to pieces. Then the sailors were afraid and each cried for help to his own god; and they threw into the sea the things that were in the ship, in order to lighten it. But Jonah had gone down into the bottom of the ship and lay fast asleep. Then the captain of the ship went and said to him, 'How is it that you are asleep? Call on your god; perhaps that god will give a thought to us, so that we may not be lost.'

And they said to one another, 'Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.' So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then they said to him, 'Tell us, what is your occupation, and where do you come from? What is your country and to what race do you belong?' He said to them, 'I am a Hebrew, and a worshipper of Jehovah, the God of heaven, who made the sea and

the dry land.' Then the men were exceedingly terrified and said to him, 'What is this you have done?' For they knew that he was fleeing from the presence of Jehovah, because he had told them.

Then they said to him, 'What shall we do to you, that the sea may be calm for us?' for the sea grew more and more stormy. He said to them, 'Take me up and throw me into the sea, and the sea will be calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm has overtaken you.' But the men rowed hard to get back to the land; they could not, however, for the sea grew more and more stormy ahead.

Therefore they cried to Jehovah and said, 'We beseech thee, O Jehovah, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, nor let us be guilty of shedding innocent blood, for thou art Jehovah; thou hast done as it pleases thee.' So they took up Jonah, and threw him into the sea; and the sea became calm. Then the men feared Jehovah exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice and made vows to him.

But Jehovah prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights. There Jonah prayed to Jehovah his God; and Jehovah spoke to the fish, and it threw Jonah out upon the dry land.

236. God's Boundless Love for All His Creatures

This message from Jehovah came to Jonah the second time, 'Arise, go to that great city, Nineveh, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah started for Nineveh, as Jehovah commanded. Now Nineveh was a great city, three days' journey across. And Jonah began by going through the city a day's

journey, and he proclaimed, 'Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown.'

And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. And when word came to the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his robe, dressed in sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he made this proclamation and published it in Nineveh: 'By the decree of the king and his nobles: Man, beast, herd, and flock shall not taste anything; let them not eat nor drink water; but let both man and beast put on sackcloth, and let them cry earnestly to God, and turn each from his evil course and from the acts of violence which they are doing. Who knows but that God may relent and avert his fierce anger, that we may not perish.'

When God saw that they turned from their evil course, he relented of the evil which he said he would do to them, and did not do it.

But this displeased Jonah very much and he was angry. And he prayed to Jehovah and said, 'Ah, Jehovah, was not this what I said when I was still in my own country? It was that which I wished to prevent by fleeing to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a God, gracious and merciful, patient, and abounding in love, and relenting of evil. Therefore, O Jehovah, take now, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live!' But Jehovah said, 'Are you doing right in being angry?'

Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down on the east side, and there made a booth for himself and sat under it, until he might see what would become of the city. And Jehovah prepared a gourd and made it grow up over Jonah as a shade over his head. So the gourd afforded Jonah great pleasure; but at dawn

the next day God prepared a worm which injured the gourd, so that it withered. And when the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind; and the sun beat upon Jonah's head, so that he was faint and begged that he might die, saying, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' But God said to Jonah, 'Are you doing right in being angry about the gourd?' He replied, 'I am doing right in being mortally angry!' Jehovah said, 'You have pity on a gourd which has cost you no trouble and which you have not made grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night. Should I not have pity on the great city Nineveh in which there are one hundred and twenty thousand human beings who cannot distinguish their right hand from their left; besides much cattle?'

DANIEL

237. The Ultimate Vindication of the Upright

In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and mental visions as he lay in bed. Then he wrote down the dream and recounted the principal points: 'I saw in my night visions the four winds of heaven rush down upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. I looked until its wings were stripped off, and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand upon two feet as a man; and a man's mind was given it.

'Then I saw a second beast, like a bear; and it raised itself upon one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth, and they said to it: "Arise, devour much flesh." After this I looked, and another beast, like a leopard, appeared, which had upon its sides four wings of a bird; and the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

'After this I saw in my night visions a fourth beast, terrible, frightful, and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the rest with its feet; and it differed from all the preceding beasts; and it had ten horns. As I was considering the horns, another little horn came up among them, by which three of the first horns were torn out by the roots; and in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

'I looked until thrones were set up, and an Aged One took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the

hair on his head like spotless wool; his throne was fiery flames, its wheels burning fire. A fiery stream flowed out before him; thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set and the books were opened.

'I looked at that time because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn spoke—I looked even until the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given as fuel for the fire. Also the dominion of the rest of the beasts was taken away, but they were allowed to live until a fixed time.

'I saw in my night visions one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven; and he advanced to the Aged One, and was brought close before him. And there was given to him dominion and glory and sovereignty, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his sovereignty one which shall not be destroyed.

'I, Daniel, was deeply troubled and my mental visions disturbed me. I approached one of those who stood by and asked him the truth about all this. So he told me and interpreted to me the symbols: "These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the sovereignty and possess it forever. And at that time every one of your people whose name shall be found written in the book shall be saved. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to reproaches and everlasting disgrace. But those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the heavens, and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars, forever and ever."'

THE LYRICS

LAMENTATIONS

THE SONGS OF THE EXILES

238. Judah's Utter Desolation

See how she sits deserted, the city once populous!
She has become as a widow, once great among nations!
A princess among the provinces, now in servitude!
At night she bitterly weeps, tears wet her cheeks;
No one comforts her of all her lovers;
Her friends have all proved untrue and become her foes.

Judah is exiled, the victim of trouble and slavery;
She dwells in the midst of the heathen, and finds no repose;
All her pursuers have caught her in her hour of distress.
The highways to Zion mourn, none comes to the feasts,
All her gates are desolate, her priests are sighing,
Her maidens are crushed with grief, and she is in bitterness.

Her foes have gained the lead, her enemies prosper,
For Jehovah has made her suffer for all her misdeeds;
Her children have passed into exile before her foes,
Gone from the daughter of Zion is all her splendor,
Her princes have become like deer that find no pasture,
For they have fled without strength at the approach of the pursuer.

Jerusalem recalls the days of her trouble and anguish,
When people fell by the foe, with none to help her,
Her enemies saw her and mocked because of her downfall.

She has sinned so deeply that she has become a thing unclean,
All who have honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness,
She too is filled with sighs, and turns away her face.

Ho! you who pass by the way, look and behold
If there be any sorrow like this, that has come upon me?
Like that with which Jehovah crushed me in the day of his wrath.
From on high he has sent fire into my bones to subdue me,
He has spread a net for my feet, and has turned me back,
He has made me faint and desolate all the day long.

239. A Lament over Jerusalem and the Temple

How the gold has lost its splendor, the finest gold is changed!
The sacred stones are poured out at the head of each street!
The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold,
They are regarded as mere earthen vessels, the work of a potter!
Even the jackals present the breast, and suckle their whelps,
But the daughters of my people are cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.

The tongue of the nursling clings to his palate from thirst;
The children beg for food, but no one offers it.
They who once fed on dainties starve in the streets;
Those reared in royal purple find refuge on dunghills.
For the guilt of my people exceeds the sin of Sodom,
That was overthrown in an instant, without the touch of human hands.

Her princes were cleaner than snow, they were whiter than milk;
Their skin was redder than coral, their beauty as sapphire.
But now they are blacker than coal, unknown on the streets;
Shrivelled their skin on their bones, it is dry as a stick.

Better those killed by the sword, than those slain by hunger,
These stricken pine away, for want of the fruits of the field.
The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children;
These serve as their food while my people are being destroyed.

Jehovah has expended his wrath, he has poured out his fury,
He has kindled a fire in Zion which has consumed her foundations.
No kings of the earth had believed nor the men of the world
That assailant or foe would enter the gates of Jerusalem.

It was for the sins of her prophets, the crimes of her priests,
Who poured out in the midst of the city the blood of the upright.
Through the streets they stagger like blind men polluted with blood.
To avoid their touch men draw aside their garments;
'Unclean!' they cry to them. 'Depart, do not touch us;'
For they wander to and fro among the nations, with no other shelter,
The wrath of the Lord has dispersed them; no more does he care,
For no one respects the priests nor regards the prophets.

Our eyes still fail as we look for help that is vain,
In our watching we watched for a nation that never brought help,
Our foes dog our footsteps, so that we cannot walk in our streets;
Our days are numbered, and completed, for our end has come!

240. The Misfortunes of the Survivors in Judah

Remember, Jehovah, our fate,
Look and see our disgrace.
Our land is turned over to strangers,
Our homes belong to aliens.
We have now become orphaned and fatherless,
Our mothers are counted as widows.

We must pay for the water we drink,
Our own wood we buy at a price.
The yokes on our necks harass us,
We are weary, but find no rest.
We have made a compact with Egypt,
With Assyria, to supply us with food.
Our fathers sinned and are dead,
While we are bearing the penalty.

Slaves have authority over us,
From their bonds there is none to deliver us.
We get bread at the peril of our lives,
Exposed to the sword of the nomads.
Our skin becomes hot like an oven,
Because of the heat and the famine.
They ravish the women in Zion,
The girls in the towns of Judah.
Officials are hung by their hands,
The elders are not respected,
The young men must bear the mill,
Under loads of wood children stumble.

Our elders are gone from the gate,
The youths have ceased from their music,
The joy of our heart has vanished,
Our dance is turned into mourning.
The crown has fallen from our head!
Unhappy are we, for we sinned.
For this reason our heart is faint,
For these causes our eyes are dim;
For the hill of Zion is desolate,
And jackals prowl about it!

241. The Heroic Spirit of the Faithful

Jehovah's love does not cease, nor ever fail.
His mercies are new every morning; great is his faithfulness.
I said, 'Jehovah is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'
Jehovah is good to those who trust him and seek him.
It is good quietly to wait for Jehovah to deliver.

It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.
Let him sit alone and be silent, for Jehovah imposed it.
Let him submit without protest, for perhaps there is hope;
Let him turn his cheek to the smiter, and suffer reproach.
The Lord will not cast off forever the children of men;
Though he causes pain, he will pity, for great is his love.
He does not willingly humble nor wound mankind.

When one grinds under foot all the prisoners of a land,
Or wrests the rights of a man before the Almighty,
Or deprives another of his right, does the Lord not see?
Who decrees and it is done, when the Lord commands it not?
Do not calamity and prosperity come from the mouth of the Almighty?

Why should mortal complain because his sins are punished?
Let us search and test our ways, and turn to Jehovah.
Let us lift our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens.

SONG OF SONGS

LOVE AND MARRIAGE SONGS

242. An Oriental Courtship Song

The Lover:

I compare you, O friend, to a steed in Pharaoh's chariots;
Your cheeks are adorned with spangles, your neck with jewels.
I will make you spangles of gold, with pendants of silver.

The Maiden:

While my king reclines on his divan, my spikenard yields fragrance.
My beloved is a bundle of myrrh that rests on my breast;
Like a cluster of henna flowers in Engedi's vineyards.
Behold you are fair, my love, your eyes are as doves.

Lover:

You too are fair, my beloved; and our couch is green.
The beams of our house are cedars, our rafters are cypresses.

Maiden:

I am but a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valley.

Lover:

As a lily among thistles so my love is among the daughters.

Maiden:

As an apple-tree among forest trees is my lover among the sons.
Under his shade I delight to sit, and his fruit is sweet to my taste!

243. A Springtime Song

Hark, my beloved!
See, he comes,
Leaping over the heights,
Springing over the hills.
My beloved is like a gazelle,
Or like a sturdy young stag;
There he stands behind our wall,
While I look at him through the window,
And peer from behind the lattice.

My beloved calls to me:
'Rise up now, O my love;
My fair one, come away!
For see, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone,
The flowers appear on the earth,
The time of singing is come,
And the turtle-dove's voice is heard,
The fig-tree ripens its fruit,
Blossoming vines give forth fragrance.
Arise, then, O my love;
My fair one, come with me.'

244. A Bridegroom's Praise of His Wedded Bride

Behold you are fair, my love, behold you are fair!
Your eyes are as those of a dove behind your veil,
Your hair like a flock of goats trailing down from Gilead,
Your teeth like a flock of shorn ewes fresh from the washing,
All of them ranged in pairs, and not one lacking.
Your lips are a thread of scarlet, your mouth is charming;
Like a piece of pomegranate your temples behind your veil;

Your neck like a tower of David built as an arsenal,
On which hang a thousand bucklers, the shields of the warriors;
Your breasts like a pair of fawns, twins of a gazelle.
You are altogether fair, my love, yes, you are perfect!

You have captured my heart, O my sister, my bride,
With one glance of your eyes, with one link of your necklace.
How sweet is your love, O my sister, my bride!
How much better your caress than wine!
Your lips, O my bride, are laden with honey,
Honey and milk are beneath your tongue;
Your ointments are sweeter than all kinds of spices.

A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride;
A spring shut up, a fountain sealed;
A fount, a well of living waters,
Like the streams that come dashing from Lebanon.

245. The Bride's Praise of Her Husband

My beloved is radiant and ruddy, chief among ten thousand;
His head is as finest gold, his locks are black as a raven,
His eyes are like doves beside the brooks,
Washed as with milk and fitly set.

His cheeks are as beds of spices, as banks of sweet herbs,
His lips are as fair as lilies, dripping with myrrh,
His hands are like rods of gold set in yellow jasper,
His body like polished ivory encrusted with sapphires.

His legs are as marble pillars, set in sockets of gold,
His appearance like that of Lebanon, stately as cedars,
His mouth is most sweet; yes, all of him is lovely.
Such is my loved one, O daughters; such is my friend!

246. The Bride's Charge to Her Husband on Entering Their New Home

Place me as a seal upon your heart,
Set me as a seal-ring on your arm;
For love is as strong as death,
And jealousy relentless as the grave;
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
A very flame of the Lord.
Many waters cannot quench love,
And floods can never drown it.
Should a man give all his wealth for love,
He would surely be despised.

Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon;
He rented the vineyard to keepers.
Each for its fruit was to bring
A thousand pieces of silver.

My vineyard—my home! is before me.
O Solomon, I leave you your thousand,
And the fruit of the vines to their keepers!

PSALMS

PSALMS OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

247. The Divine King

The earth is the Lord's in its fulness,
The world and those who live in it;
He founded it on the seas,
And established it on the floods.

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?
Who may stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
Who cherishes no evil purpose,
Nor swears with intent to deceive.
He shall win from the Lord a blessing,
And approval from God his Savior.
Such is the man who may worship him,
Who may enter thy presence, O God of Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O gates,
Be lifted up, O everlasting doors,
Let the King of Glory come in!

Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty,
The Lord, mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates,
Be lifted up, O everlasting doors,
That the King of Glory may come in.

Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord, the God of hosts,
He is the King of Glory!

248. The Majestic Ruler of the Universe

The Lord reigns as King,
He is clothed with a garment of majesty,
He has girded himself with strength.
Firm stands the world, immovable,
Firm stands thy throne from of old,
From eternity art thou.

The floods have raised up, O Lord,
The floods have raised up their voice,
The floods have raised up their tumult.
But mightier than the roar of many waters,
Mightier than the breakers of the sea,
O Lord, thou art supreme on high.
What thou hast ordained is most just;
Holiness befits thy temple,
O Lord, for evermore.

249. The God Supreme above All Gods

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord,
Let us shout to the Rock who saves us,
Let us come before him with thanksgiving,
Let us sing to him joyful songs;
For the Lord is indeed a great God,
A great King above all gods,
In whose hand are the depths of the earth,
The heights of the mountains are his,
The sea is his, for he made it,
And his hands prepared the dry land.

Oh come, let us worship and bow down,
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
For he is the Lord our God,
And we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

If to-day you will hear his voice,
Harden not your heart as at Meribah,

Or that day at Massah in the wilderness,
When your fathers tested and tried me,
Although they had seen my work.

For forty years I loathed that generation,
And said, 'They are a fickle people,
They know not how they should walk.'
So I solemnly swore in my anger,
That they should not enter my place of rest.

250. God's Just Rule

Oh, sing to the Lord a new song;
Sing to the Lord, all the earth,
Sing to the Lord, praise his name,
Proclaim his salvation each day;
Tell his glory among the heathen,
His wonders among all peoples.

God is great, and worthy of praise,
Above all gods should he be revered,
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But it is the Lord who made the heavens.
Honor and majesty are in his presence,
Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord, you tribes of the nations,
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory that is due him;
Bring an offering, and enter his courts.
Oh, worship the Lord in holy attire,
Tremble before him, all the earth.
Say to the nations, 'The Lord reigns,
And he will rule the peoples justly.'

Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar and all of its inhabitants,
Let the fields exult, and all that is in them,

Let the trees of the forest sing with joy
Before the Lord, for he has come,
For he has come to rule the earth;
He will rule the world with justice,
He will rule the nations with faithfulness.

251. God's Care for His People

The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice,
Let the many distant lands be glad.
Clouds and darkness are round about him,
Right and justice support his throne.
A fire goes before him,
And blazes around his steps.
His lightning illumines the world,
Earth trembles at the sight.
The mountains melt like wax
Before the Lord of the earth.
The heavens declare his righteousness,
And all peoples behold his glory.

Put to shame are the image-worshippers,
All who boast of their idols;
All the gods bow down before him.
Zion heard and was glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced,
Because of thy judgments, O Lord,
For thou art supreme on the earth,
Exalted above all gods.

The Lord loves those who hate evil,
He guards the lives of the faithful;
From the hand of the wicked he saves them.
Light shines forth for the righteous,
And joy for the upright in heart.
Rejoice in the Lord, you upright,
Give thanks in praise of his holiness.

252. God's Benign Direction of Human History

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
And to praise thy name, O Most High;
To proclaim thy love in the morning,
And thy faithfulness every night,
With a ten-stringed psaltery and harp,
With music that throbs on the lyre.
For thou makest me glad by thy deeds,
I exult in the work of thy hands.

How great are thy works, O Lord!
Thy thoughts are exceedingly deep.
A stupid man cannot discern them,
Nor can a fool understand this:
When the wicked shoot up like the grass,
And all who do wrong flourish,
It is but to perish forever.

But thou art supreme forever;
For lo, thine enemies, Lord,
Behold—thine enemies perish,
And all evil-doers are scattered.
Thou hast made my strength invincible,
And anointed me afresh with oil.
My eyes shall gloat over my foes,
My ears hear the doom of the wicked.

The righteous shall shoot up like palms,
They shall grow like cedars in Lebanon.
Planted in the house of the Lord,
They shall flourish in the courts of our God.
In old age they shall still bear fruit,
They shall be full of sap and flourishing,
To show that the Lord is upright,
My rock in whom is no wrong.

253. God's Power to Deliver from All Perils

Give thanks to the Lord, for his goodness,
For his love endures forever.
Let those he has ransomed say so,
Whom he has set free from the hand of the foe,
And gathered together from many lands,
From the east, from the west,
From the north and the south.

Some strayed in the barren wilderness,
Finding no inhabited city,
Hungry, indeed, and thirsty,
Their very life ebbing away.
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
And he saved them from their distresses.
He led them along the right way,
Till they reached an inhabited city.
Let them praise the Lord for his love,
And his wonderful works unto men!
For he satisfies the longing soul,
And the hungry he fills with good things.

Some dwelt in darkness and gloom,
Being bound in affliction and iron,
Because they had rebelled against God,
And despised the counsel of the Most High.
He humbled their heart with sorrow;
When they fell, there was none to help them.
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
And he saved them from their distresses.
Out of darkness and gloom he brought them,
And broke their bonds in pieces.
Let them praise the Lord for his love,
And his wonderful works unto men!
For he shattered the gates of brass,
And hewed bars of iron asunder.

Fools because of their wrong-doing,
And because of their sins were afflicted;
They loathed all kinds of food,
And drew near to the gates of death.
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
And he saved them from all their distresses.
He sent his command to heal them,
And saved their life from destruction.
Let them praise the Lord for his love,
And his wonderful works unto men!
Let them sacrifice to him a thank-offering,
And with joy rehearse his deeds.

Those who go to the sea in ships,
Who do business in great waters,
They see the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the great deep.
When he speaks the tempest rises,
And tosses the waves on high.
Up to heaven, then down they go,
Their courage melts at the danger,
They stagger and reel like drunkards,
And their skill is all exhausted.
Then they cry to the Lord in their trouble,
And he saves them from their distresses.
He makes the tempest a calm,
And the waves of the sea are still.
They are glad when the waves subside;
To the haven they long for he brings them.
Let them praise the Lord for his love,
For his wonderful works unto men;
In the popular assembly extol him,
In the council of elders praise him.

254. God's Regard for the Poor and Needy

Praise the Lord, O you his servants, praise his name,
May the Lord's name now and evermore be blessed,

From sunrise to sunset let his name be praised!
He is high above all nations, his glory above the heavens.
Who is like the Lord our God, enthroned on high,
Who condescends to see the things in heaven and earth?

He who raises the poor out of the dust, and the needy
from the refuse heap,
That he may seat him with nobles, with the nobles of
his people,
Who gives the childless woman a home, and makes her
the joyful mother of children.

255. God's Care for the Lowly

I will give thee thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart,
In thy presence, O God, I will sing thy praises,
I will worship toward thy holy temple,
And praise thy name for thy goodness and faithfulness,
For thou hast made thy word even greater than thy
name,
In the day that I called thou didst answer me,
Thou didst greatly strengthen my soul.
All the kings of the earth give thee thanks, O Lord,
For they have heard the words of thy mouth.
They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
For great is the glory of the Lord.

Though the Lord is on high, he sees the lowly,
And the haughty he knows from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
Thou dost preserve my life,
Thou stretchest thy hand against my foes,
And thy right hand delivers me;
The Lord will accomplish it for my sake.
Thy love, O Lord, is eternal;
Forsake not the works of thy hands.

256. God's Protection of His Servant

I love thee, O Lord, my strength,
My rock, my fortress, my deliverer,
My stronghold in which I seek refuge,
My shield, and my tower of defense.

I proclaim that the Lord should be praised,
For I have been saved from my enemies.
The billows of death surrounded me,
Floods of destruction appalled me.
The cords of the lower world encircled me,
The snares of death confronted me.
In my distress I called upon the Lord,
And cried for help to my God;
From his temple he heard my voice,
My cry for help he heard.

The solid earth rocked and reeled,
The foundations of the mountains trembled,
They tottered because he was wroth.
He reached from on high and grasped me,
From many waters he rescued me,
From my powerful foes he saved me,
From my haters, for they were too strong for me,
Who attacked me in my day of calamity;
But the Lord became my support,
He led me into an open place,
He delivered me because he loves me.

He dealt with me according to my uprightness,
According to the cleanness of my hands.
For I have lived as the Lord would have me,
And have not wilfully been disloyal to my God.
For I have kept in mind all his decisions,
And I have not disregarded his statutes.
I was also upright before him,
And I kept myself from sinning.

So the Lord has rewarded me according to my uprightness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

To the kind thou dost show thyself kind,
To the upright man, thou art upright,
To the pure thou dost show thyself pure,
But to the crooked equal to his craft;
For thou savest a people who are humble,
But thou humblest those who are haughty.
It is thou who lightest my lamp,
My God illumines my darkness.
With thy help I rush at a troop,
With God's aid I scale a wall.
Yes, God's way is perfect,
And the word of God is proved true;
He is a shield to all who trust him.

257. God's Protection of His Chosen from Heathen Assaults

Why do the nations throng together,
And the peoples devise vain plans?
The kings of the earth take their stand,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord and his anointed:
'Let us tear their bonds apart,
Let us throw off from us their cords.'

One throned in heaven laughs,
The Lord himself shall mock them,
Then will he say in his wrath,
In his burning anger affrighting them:
'It is I who have set my king
On Zion, my holy mountain.'

Let me state the Lord's decree:
He has said to me, 'You are my son,

This day have I begotten you;
I will make the nations your heritage,
And the ends of the earth your possession.
You shall break them with rod of iron,
Like a potter's vessel shatter them.'

Therefore, be wise, O kings,
Be advised, O rulers of earth!
Serve the Lord with fear,
And rejoice in him with trembling.
Worship him sincerely,
Lest through his anger you perish,
For his anger is quickly kindled.
Happy all who seek refuge in him!

258. God's Constant Watchfulness

Happy the nation whose God is the Lord,
The people he chooses as his own.
The Lord looks down from heaven,
He looks upon all mankind,
From the place where he sits he observes
All the inhabitants of earth;
He alone has fashioned their minds,
He perceives their every act.

The king is not saved by the size of his army,
Nor a warrior delivered by greatness of strength,
A horse is a vain thing for safety,
For its great power does not save.
The Lord watches over his worshippers,
Who expectantly wait for his love,
To deliver their life from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.

Our life depends upon the Lord,
He is our help and our shield,
For in him our heart rejoices,

In his holy name we trust.
Let thy love, O Lord, be over us,
For our hope is fixed on thee!

259. God's Readiness to Deliver the Upright

I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise is continually in my mouth,
My soul glories in the Lord,
Let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
O exalt the Lord with me,
Let us praise his name together.

I sought the Lord and he answered me,
From all my fears he delivered me.
He who looks to him, becomes radiant,
And his face is not covered with shame.
This afflicted man cried and he heard him,
And from all his distresses delivered him.
The angel of the Lord encamps
About those who revere him, and saves them.

Taste and see that the Lord is good;
Happy the man who seeks refuge with him.
Revere the Lord, O holy ones,
For those who revere him lack nothing.
Though young lions feel want and suffer hunger,
Those who seek the Lord shall lack no good thing.

Come, children, listen to me;
I will teach you true religion:
Who of you desires to live,
Loves long life that he may enjoy happiness?
Then keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking falsehood;
Turn from evil and do good,
Seek for peace and pursue it.

The Lord is against evil-doers,
To cut off their memory from the earth.
The Lord watches over the upright,
His ear is open to their cry.
When they cry to the Lord he hears,
And saves them from all their distresses.

The Lord is near those who are broken-hearted,
He delivers those whose spirits are crushed.
The misfortunes of the upright are many,
But the Lord delivers him from them all.
The Lord guards all his bones,
Not one of them is broken.
Misfortune will slay the wicked,
Those who hate the upright shall be condemned;
But the Lord redeems his servants,
And none who takes refuge in him shall be condemned.

260. God's Goodness and Mercy

I will extol thee, my God, thou King,
And praise thy name forever.
All day long will I give thee praise,
And glorify thy name forever.

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised,
And his greatness cannot be searched out.
One generation to another lauds thy works,
And declares thy mighty deeds.
On the glorious splendor of thy majesty
And thy wondrous works I meditate.
They speak of the might of thy awful acts,
While I tell of thy great deeds.
They recall thy infinite goodness,
And sing aloud of thy righteousness.

The Lord is gracious and merciful,
Patient, and full of loving-kindness.

The Lord is good to all,
Showing mercy to all his creatures.
All thy works give thee thanks, O Lord,
And those who love thee praise thee,
They speak of thy glorious rule,
And proclaim thy mighty power,
That men may know thy great deeds,
And the glorious splendor of thy rule.
Thy rule is an everlasting rule,
Thy dominion endures forever.

The Lord upholds all who fall,
And raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all wait for thee,
And thou givest them food in due season.
Thou it is who openest thy hand,
And satisfiest the desires of all creatures.

The Lord is righteous in all his ways,
And gracious in all his acts.
He is near all who call upon him,
To all who call upon him in truth.
He fulfils the desire of his worshippers,
He hears their cry and saves them.
He takes care of all who love him,
But destroys all those who do wrong.

My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord.
Let all flesh praise his holy name forever.

261. God's Protection of His Holy City

Great is the Lord and highly praised in the city of our God,
His holy mount is fair in situation, the joy of the whole earth,
On the northern slopes, Zion, the city of the great King.

God in her citadels has shown himself a tower of strength,
For once the kings assembled and then advanced together,
But when they saw, they were amazed, and fled away dismayed,
Trembling seized them there, pain as that of a woman in childbirth,
As when an east wind dashes into pieces the ships of Tarshish.
As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts—
May God preserve his city forever and ever.

We meditate, Lord, on thy goodness as we stand within thy temple;
As is thy name, O Lord, so is thy fame to the ends of the earth;
Thy right hand is full of justice; therefore Mount Zion rejoices;
The daughters of Judah exult in thy righteous decisions.

Walk about Zion, encircle her, and count her towers,
Mark well her ramparts, and pass between her citadels,
That you may tell to later generations that such is God,
Our God forever, who will guide us eternally.

262. The Joy of Worshipping the Lord in His Temple

How dear is the place where thou dwellest, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs and pines to see the courts of the Lord;
My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.
Verily the sparrow has found for herself a home,
And the swallow a nest, in which to lay her young,
Even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God!
Happy are those who live in thy temple, who ever praise thee!

Happy are those who find strength in thee, who are
pilgrims at heart.
As they pass through the valley of weeping they make
it a place of springs;
The early rain, too, covers it over with pools.
They go from strength to strength, till they see God in
Zion.

O Lord, O God of hosts, give heed to my prayer;
Give ear, O God of Jacob, for thou art our shield;
Behold, O God, and look upon thine anointed,
For one day in thy courts is better than a thousand
without.
I would rather lie on the threshold of thy temple, O God,
Than dwell within the tents of the wicked.
For the Lord, my God, is a sun and a shield,
The Lord imparts grace and majesty,
He withholds no good thing from those who live up-
rightly.
O Lord of hosts, happy the man who trusts in thee!

263. The Spirit of True Worship

Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth,
Serve the Lord with gladness,
Come into his presence with singing,
Know that the Lord is God,
He has made us and we are his,
His people, the flock that he tends.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
His courts with songs of rejoicing,
Give thanks to him, praise his name,
He is good, his kindness eternal,
And his faithfulness unto all generations.

264. Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Great Affliction

I love the Lord because he has heard
My voice and my supplications;
Because he has listened to my cry,
I will call upon him as long as I live.

The cords of death encircled me,
Mortal anguish seized me,
I experienced trouble and sorrow;
Then I called on the name of the Lord:
'O Lord, save thou my life.'

The Lord is gracious and righteous!
Our God, indeed, is merciful.
The Lord protects the simple;
When I was weak, he helped me.
Return, O my soul, to your resting-place,
For the Lord has dealt bountifully with me.

He has saved me from death,
My eyes from tears,
My feet from falling.
I will walk before him
In the land of the living.
I trusted, though saying,
'I am greatly afflicted;'
Though I said in my haste,
'All men are liars.'

How can I repay the Lord
For all his benefits toward me?
I will take the cup of salvation,
And call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord
In the presence of all the people.

Precious in the eyes of the Lord
Is the death of those who love him.
O Lord, I am truly thy servant,
Thy servant, the son of thy maid servant;
Thou indeed hast loosed my bonds.

I will give to thee a thank-offering,
And will call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord
In the presence of all his people;
In the courts of the house of the Lord,
Within you, O Jerusalem!

265. A Universal Call to Praise the Lord

Praise the Lord from the heavens,
Praise him on the heights.
Praise him, all his angels,
Praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon,
Praise him, all stars of light!
Praise him, heavens of heavens,
And waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For at his command they were made;
He fixed them forever and ever,
Set a bound they must not pass.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
Sea-monsters and all deeps!
Fire, hail, snow, and vapor,
Storm wind, fulfilling his word!

Mountains and all hills,
Fruit-trees and all cedars!
Wild beasts and all cattle,
Creeping things and winged birds!

Kings of earth and all peoples,
All rulers and judges of earth,
Young men and maidens too,
Old men and children together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For his name alone is exalted.
Over heaven and earth is his majesty,
He has strengthened the might of his people;
He is praised by all who are faithful,
By the Israelites, who are near him.

266. The United Praise of All Creation

Praise God in his holy place,
Praise him for his mighty firmament,
Praise him for his deeds of power,
Praise him for his infinite greatness.

Praise him with the blast of the horn,
Praise him with lyre and harp,
Praise him with timbrel and dance,
Praise him with strings and pipe,
Praise him with clanging cymbals,
Praise him with clashing cymbals.
Let all that breathes praise the Lord!

HYMNS OF TRUST AND ADORATION

267. The Revelation of God in the Work of Creation

O Lord, our God, how glorious
Is thy name in all the earth!

Thou hast spread thy splendor over the heavens;
At the cry of babes and infants
Thou hast set up a bulwark, because of thine enemies,
To silence the foe and avenger.

When I see thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and stars which thou hast prepared;
What is man that thou art mindful of him;
Or the son of man that thou visitest him?

Yet thou hast made him little less than divine,
And hast crowned him with glory and honor,
Making him lord of creation,
So that all things are subject to him.

The sheep and the oxen, all of them,
Yes, and the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air and the fish,
That dart through the paths of the sea.

O Lord, our God, how glorious
Is thy name in all the earth!

268. God's Goodness Revealed in Nature and in the Law

The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament shows his handiwork.

Day by day they pour forth speech,
Night by night reveal knowledge.
No speech nor words are spoken,
Not a sound from them is heard.
Yet their voice goes throughout the earth,
Their words to the end of the world.

He has set in them a tent for the sun,
Who is like a bridegroom leaving his tent;
He rejoices as a strong man to run his course.
He sets out from one end of the heavens,
To the other end is his circuit,
And nothing is hid from his heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul,
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple,
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart,
The command of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes,
The religion of the Lord is clean, enduring forever,
The decisions of the Lord are true and right altogether,
More to be desired than gold, yes, than much fine gold,
Sweeter are they than honey as it drops from the honeycomb.
By them thy servant is warned; in the keeping is great reward.

Who can discern his own errors? Cleanse me from secret faults;
Restrain thy servant from reckless sins; let them not rule over me.
Then I shall be blameless and innocent of any great transgression.
May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable,
In thy sight forever, O Lord, my Rock and my Defender.

269. God's Power Revealed in the Storm

Ascribe glory and honor to the Lord, O angels,
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength,
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due him;
Worship the Lord in holy attire.

The voice of the Lord is on the waters,
The God of glory thunders,
The Lord is upon the great waters,
The voice of the Lord is powerful,
The voice of the Lord is majestic!

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars,
The Lord shatters the cedars of Lebanon,
Making Lebanon skip like a calf,
And Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord cleaves the forked lightning,
The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness.
The Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh,
The voice of the Lord twists the oaks,
The voice of the Lord strips the forests.

In his temple all say, 'Glory!'
The Lord sat enthroned at the flood,
And the Lord sits as king forever.
The Lord gives strength to his people,
He blesses his people with peace.

270. God, the Benign Ruler of the Universe

It is fitting to sing praise to thee, O God, in Zion,
And unto thee shall the vow be paid in Jerusalem.
O thou who hearest prayer, all men shall come to thee!
Though our sins are too mighty for us, thou wilt forgive them.

Happy the man whom thou choosest to dwell in thy courts;
We are satisfied with the joys of thy house, of thy holy temple.

By dread deeds thou answerest us faithfully, O God of our salvation,
Thou, the confidence of the ends of the earth and of distant peoples,
Who, girded with might, established the hills by thy strength,
Who stillest the roaring of the seas, and the tumult of the nations;
Those also who live at the ends of the earth fear thy signs,
Thou makest the distant East and West shout with joy.

Thou visitest the earth and waterest it, thou dost greatly enrich it,
With the brook of God which is full of water, thou preparest for the grain,
For thus thou dost make it ready, saturating its furrows.
Thou dost settle its ridges, making it soft with showers,
Thou dost bless its growth, thou crownest the year with thy goodness,
And thy paths and the pastures of the wilderness drip with fertility.
The hills are girded with joy; they are clothed with sheep;
The valleys with grain are covered; they shout and sing joyfully.

271. God's Love and Faithfulness

I will sing of the love of the Lord forever,
Proclaiming thy faithfulness to all generations.
For thou didst promise to establish thy love forever;
Firm as the heavens stands thy faithfulness.

The heavens praise thy wonders, O Lord.
Thy faithfulness too in the holy assembly,
For who in the skies compares with the Lord?
Who is like the Lord among the sons of God?

A God awe-inspiring in the council of the holy ones,
Exalted and revered above all who surround him!
O Lord, God of hosts, who is strong like thee?
Thy faithfulness, O Lord, is around about thee.

Thou art the lord of the proud-swelling sea,
When its waves rise up, it is thou who stillest them.
Thou didst break Chaos in pieces, as one that is slain.
Thou scatterest thy foes with thy mighty arm.

The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine;
The world and its people—thou hast founded them.
The north and the south, it is thou who didst create them;
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in thy name.

Thine is an arm endued with might,
Strong is thy hand, and thy right hand exalted.
Justice and righteousness are thy throne's foundation;
Goodness and faithfulness ever attend thee.

Happy are the people who know the festal call,
They live, O Lord, in the light of thy presence,
In thy name they sing glad songs all the day,
And through thy righteousness they are exalted.

272. God's Provision for All His Creatures

Bless the Lord, O my soul!
O Lord, my God, thou art great;
Thou art clothed with glory and majesty,
Thou puttest on light as a mantle;
Thou stretchest the heavens like a tent,

Thou framest thy upper stories in the waters,
Thou makest the clouds thy chariot,
Thou ridest on the wings of the wind,
Thou makest winds thy messengers,
Flames of fire are thy servants.

Thou didst fix the earth on its foundations,
That it should not be moved forever.
Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment.
The waters stood far above the mountains,
But at thy rebuke they fled,
At the sound of thy thunder they hastened away,
Not to pass the bound thou hadst set,
Not to return to cover the earth.
Mountains rose, valleys sank,
To the place which thou hadst prepared for them.

Thou sendest the springs to the valleys,
They run down between the mountains,
They give drink to every wild beast,
The wild asses quench their thirst.
The birds make their home beside them,
They sing from among the branches.

Thou waterest the mountains from thine upper stories;
The earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.
Thou makest grass spring up for the cattle,
And herbage for the service of man,
Causing food to spring from the earth,
Wine to gladden man's heart,
Oil that makes his face shine,
And bread to strengthen his heart.

The trees of the Lord are full of sap,
The cedars of Lebanon, which he has planted,
Where the birds build their nests;
The stork has her home in the fir-trees.
The high mountains are for the wild goats,
The rocks are a hiding-place for the marmots.

Thou createst the moon to divide the year,
The sun knows when it should set.
Thou makest darkness, and it is night,
In which wild beasts creep forth;
The young lions roar for their prey,
And seek their food from God.
When the sun arises they vanish,
And lay themselves down in their dens.
Man goes out to his work,
To toil until evening comes.

O Lord, how many thy works!
Wisely thou madest them all;
The earth is full of thy creatures.
There is the sea, great and wide,
With its crawling things innumerable,
Living things both small and great;
There go the monsters of the sea,
And the dragon thou madest to play.

These all wait for thee,
To give them their food in due season.
When thou givest to them, they gather it;
Thou openest thy hand, they are satisfied.
Thou hidest thy face, they are frightened;
Thou takest their breath, they die,
And return to the dust from which they came.
Thou sendest thy spirit, and they are created;
Thou refillest the earth with living things.

May the glory of the Lord be eternal,
Let the Lord rejoice in his works.
He looks at the earth, and it trembles,
He touches the mountains, and they smoke.
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live,
I will sing praise to my God while I exist.
May my meditation be pleasing unto him;
I myself find my joy in the Lord.

May sinners vanish from the earth,
And let the wicked be no more.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.

273. The Boundlessness of God's Love

Thy love, O Lord, extends to heaven,
Thy faithfulness even to the skies,
Thy righteousness is as the mighty mountains,
Thy judgments are like the great deep.

Thou preservest both man and beast,
O God, how precious is thy love!
Men trust in the shadow of thy wings,
They are satisfied with the rich things of thy house,
Thou makest them drink from the stream of thy pleasures,
For with thee is the fountain of life,
And in thy light we see light.

O continue thy love to those who know thee,
And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.
Let not the feet of the arrogant trample me,
Nor the hand of wrong-doers drive me away.

Already the evil-doers have fallen,
They are cast down and are unable to rise!

274. God's Fatherly Goodness

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless his holy name,
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits,
Who forgives all your iniquities,
And heals all your diseases,
Who redeems your life from the grave,
And crowns you with love and tender mercy,

Who satisfies your mouth with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord is a doer of righteous acts,
And of justice to all the oppressed.
He made known his laws to Moses,
His deeds to the people of Israel.

The Lord is merciful and gracious,
Patient and full of love.
He will not always contend,
Nor retain his anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
So great is his love toward those who revere him.
As far as the east is from the west
Has he removed our wrong deeds from us.

As a father loves his children,
So the Lord loves those who revere him,
For he understands our nature,
He remembers that we are dust.

Frail man—his days are as grass;
As a flower of the field, he flourishes,
For the wind passes over it and it is gone,
And its place knows it no more.

But the love of the Lord is eternal,
And his righteousness to children's children,
To those who keep their covenant with him,
And remember to obey his commands.

He has established his throne in the heavens,
And his rule extends over all.
Bless the Lord, his angels,
You strong ones who do his bidding.

Bless the Lord, all his hosts,
You servants who do his will,
Bless the Lord, all his works,
In every place where he rules,
Bless the Lord, O my soul.

275. God's Intimate Knowledge of Men

O Lord, thou searchest and knowest me,
Whether I sit or stand, thou knowest,
Thou readest my thought afar off,
When I walk or lie down thou determinedst it.

Thou knowest all my ways.
There is not a word on my tongue
That thou, O Lord, dost not know!
Behind and before thou enfoldest me,
Over me thou dost lay thy hand.
Such knowledge for me is too wonderful!
Too high, I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from thy spirit,
Where shall I flee from thy presence?
If I climb into heaven, thou art there,
If I lie down in the grave, thou art there.

Should I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell on the most distant sea,
Even there thy hand would grasp me,
Thy right hand would hold me fast.

If I say, 'The darkness will hide me,
And the night throw its curtain about me,'
Even darkness for thee is not dark,
But the night shines clear as the day.

Thou didst form my vital parts,
Thou didst knit me in the womb,

I thank thee, for I am wonderfully made;
Fearful and wonderful are thy works.

Thou knowest me right well,
My frame was not hid from thee
When I was made in secret,
And formed in the depths of the womb.

Thine eyes did see me while yet unformed,
And in thy book were inscribed
All the days that were preordained for me,
When as yet there were none of them.

How precious to me are thy thoughts, O God!
How great is the sum of them all!
Should I count them, they would be more than the sand;
When I awake I am still with thee.

Search me, O God, and know my heart,
Try me, and know my secret thoughts,
And see if I have any evil in me,
And lead me in the way to eternal life.

276. Confidence of God's Forgiving Love

Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O Lord; hear my voice,
O Lord, let thine ear be attentive to the sound of my supplication.
If thou shouldst keep a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
But with thee there is forgiveness, that thou mayest be revered.

I wait for the Lord, I wait, and in his promise I hope,
I wait for the Lord more than the watchmen wait for the morning.

Let Israel wait for the Lord, for he is merciful and able
to deliver,
And he will deliver the people of Israel from all their
sins.

277. Longings that God Alone Can Satisfy

As a hart longs for the water brooks,
So my soul longs for thee, O God,
My soul thirsts for the Lord, the living God.
When shall I come and worship him in his temple?
My tears are my food by day and by night,
While men continually say to me, 'Where is your God?'

I remember well—and my heart sinks within me—
How I marched at the head of the throng to God's house,
With the joyous shouts and praise of a festal throng.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
And why do you moan within me?
Wait for God, for I shall yet praise him,
Who is my God and my Savior!

My soul is cast down within me, so I remember thee,
From the land of the Jordan and Hermon and Mount
Mizar.
Deep calls to deep in the roar of thy cataracts;
Thy breakers and thy billows have all passed over me.
I say to God, my Rock, 'Why hast thou forgotten me?
Why go I mourning, oppressed by my foe,
While the taunts of my enemies pierce me to the heart,
While they continually say to me, "Where is your
God?"'

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
And why do you moan within me?
Wait for God, for I shall yet praise him,
Who is my Savior and my God!

Judge me and plead my cause against a merciless people;
From the deceitful and wicked man, O God, deliver me,
For why, O God of my refuge, hast thou rejected me?
Why must I go about mourning oppressed by my foe?
O send forth thy light and thy truth; let them be my guides,
Let them bring me to thy holy mount, to the place where thou dwellest;
I will go to God's altar, to the God who is my joy,
And with joy will I praise thee on the lyre, O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
And why do you moan within me?
Wait for God, for I shall yet praise him,
Who is my Savior and my God.

278. Faith in God's Protection

To thee, O God, I lift up my soul,
All the day long do I wait for thee.
I trust in thee, O God, let me not be ashamed;
Let not my enemies exult over me,
And let none who hope in thee be ashamed;
But let wanton traitors be disgraced.

Show me thy ways, O Lord,
Teach me thy way to live.
Lead me in thy truth and teach me,
For thou art the God who saves me,
And in thee do I hope continually.

Remember thy tender mercies, O Lord,
And thy loving deeds, for they are eternal.
Do not recall the sins of my youth,
But in thy love remember thou me,
Because of thy goodness, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord,
So he teaches sinners the way,
He guides the humble aright,
And teaches the meek his way,
All his rules are loving and true,
To those who follow his law and precepts.
For thy name's sake, O Lord,
Pardon my guilt, for it is great.

Who is the man that reveres the Lord?
He will teach him the way to choose.
That man shall continue to prosper,
And his children inherit the land.
He is friendly with those who revere him,
And with his covenant he makes them acquainted.

My eyes are ever turned toward the Lord,
For he delivers my feet from the net.
Turn to me and be gracious,
For I am alone and afflicted;
Relieve the troubles of my heart,
And deliver me from my distresses;
Look on my affliction and trouble,
And pardon all my sins.

Consider my foes, for they are many,
And they hate me with violent hatred;
Oh save my life and deliver me,
Let me not be ashamed, for I trust thee.
Let innocence and uprightness preserve me,
For I wait for thee, O Lord.

279. God the Unfailing Refuge

God is our refuge and strength,
An ever-present help in trouble.
So we fear not, though the earth trembles,
And mountains totter into the heart of the sea;

Though its waters roar and foam,
Though mountains quake at its uproar.
The Lord of hosts is with us,
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

As the brooks refresh the city of God,
So the Most High sanctifies his abiding-place;
God is in her midst, she cannot be moved,
God will help her at the turn of the morn.
Nations were in tumult, kingdoms tottered,
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
The Lord of hosts is with us,
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, see the mighty works of the Lord,
Who makes wars cease to the end of the earth.
He snaps the bow, and breaks the spear,
And burns up the chariots with fire.
'Be still, and know that I am God,
Exalted over the nations, exalted on earth.'
The Lord of hosts is with us,
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

280. The One Source of Hope and Strength

For God alone silently wait,
O my soul, for from him comes my hope.
He alone is my rock and my help,
My high tower; I shall never be moved.

How long will you assail a man,
And all seek to strike him down?
Like a tottering wall, or a bulging fence
They plan to throw him down from his height.
They take pleasure only in falsehoods;
They bless with their mouth, cursing inwardly.

For God alone silently wait,
O my soul, for from him comes my hope.

He alone is my rock and my help,
My high tower; I shall never be moved.

Upon God depends my safety and honor,
God is my strong rock and refuge!
Trust him at all times, O people,
Pour out your heart before him;
God is our refuge!

The lowly are only a breath,
The lofty are but an illusion;
When weighed in the scales,
They are all mere nothing!
Trust not in oppression,
Put no vain hope in robbery;
As for riches, if they increase,
Set not your heart upon them.

Once God has spoken,
Twice have I heard this:
Power belongs to God.
Thine, O Lord, is the love,
For thou dost reward each man
According to what he has done.

281. A Spiritual Love-Song

O Lord, thou art my God whom I seek,
For thee my soul thirsts,
For thee my flesh longs,
As a parched land, athirst and waterless,
As once I beheld thee in the sanctuary,
Seeing thy power and thy glory.

Because thy love is better than life,
My lips will ever praise thee.
So I will bless thee while I live,
In thy name I will lift up my hands.

I will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,
And I will praise thee with joyful lips.

I remember thee upon my couch,
I meditate on thee in the night watches,
For thou hast been my help,
And in the shadow of thy wings I rejoice.
My soul clings close to thee,
Thy right hand holds me fast.

282. God the Helper of the Needy.

Praise the Lord, O my soul!
While I live I will praise the Lord,
While I exist I will sing praises to my God.

Put not your trust in princes,
In mortal men, who cannot help,
For when their breath goes out
They then return to the dust,
And on that day they perish.

Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
Whose hope is in the Lord his God,
Who made heaven and earth,
The sea and all that is in them;
Who keeps his word forever,
Who does justice to the oppressed,
Who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord releases the prisoners,
The Lord gives sight to the blind,
The Lord raises up those bowed down,
The Lord loves the upright,
The Lord protects the stranger,
He upholds the orphan and widow,
But he blocks the way of the wicked.
The Lord reigns forever,
Thy God, O Zion, to all generations!

283. The Joy of Complete Trust in God

Protect me, O God, for I seek refuge in thee,
To the Lord, I say, 'Thou art my God,'
For all my welfare depends upon thee.
O Lord, my share and my portion,
It is thou who maintainest my lot.
The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places,
Yes, a fair heritage is mine.

I will bless the Lord who counsels me,
In the night my heart instructs me.
I have kept the Lord ever before me,
With him at my right hand I cannot be moved,
So my mind and my heart rejoice,
My body also dwells in safety,
For thou wilt not give me up to death,
Nor let one who loves thee see the grave.
Thou wilt show me the pathway of life,
In thy presence is fulness of joy,
In thy right hand pleasures forever.

284. The Happiness of Those Who Trust God

I waited patiently for the Lord, and he listened to my cry,
He drew me out of the horrible pit and from the miry clay,
And he planted my feet on a rock, he made firm my steps,
And he put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.
Many see and fear and trust the Lord.

Happy is the man who puts his trust in the Lord,
And has no regard for the arrogant and for faithless liars.
Great things thou hast done, O Lord, my God;
Thy wonderful works and plans for us are incomparable.
Should I wish to proclaim and tell them, they are innumerable.

Sacrifice and cereal-offering thou dost not desire; thou hast given me understanding,
Burnt-offerings and sin-offerings thou dost not demand; I then said:
'See, I come, as is prescribed for me in the book of the law.
I delight to do thy will, O my God, and thy law is in my heart.
I have proclaimed thy righteousness in the great assembly.

Thou knowest, O Lord, that I have not sealed my lips,
That I have not hid thy righteousness in my breast,
But have declared thy fidelity and thy power to save.
I have not concealed thy love and thy truth from the great congregation.
Withhold not thy compassion from me, O Lord;
Thy love and thy faithfulness will keep me safe forever.'

285. The Divine Shepherd, Guide, and Host

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me to the waters of the resting-place,
He restores my life.

He guides me in straight paths for his name's sake;
Though I walk through the valley of death,
I fear no evil, for thou art with me,
Thy rod and thy staff—they comfort me.

Thou spreadest a table before me in the presence of my enemies,
Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runs over;
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

286. The Silent Protector of His People

I lift up my eyes to the hills; from whence comes my help?
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you does not slumber;
Behold, he who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps!

The Lord is your protector; the Lord is your shade upon your right hand;
The sun shall not smite you by day nor the moon by night!
The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will preserve your life;
The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in forevermore!

PRAYERS

287. A Cry for Help in Mortal Distress

Rebuke me not, Lord, in thine anger,
Nor chastise me in thy wrath.
Be gracious, Lord, for I am weak,
Heal me, for racked is my body,
And my spirit is completely broken.

And thou, O Lord—how much longer?
Turn, O Lord, and save me,
Save me because of thy love,
For in death no one remembers thee;
In the grave who can praise thee?

I am worn out by my groaning;
Every night I lament on my bed,
And drench my couch with my tears.
My eye is sunken with grief,
And dim because of my foes.

Depart from me, all evil-doers,
For the Lord has heard my weeping,
The Lord has heard my entreaty,
The Lord has accepted my prayer.

All my foes shall be put to shame,
They shall quickly turn back in disgrace.

288. An Evening Prayer

Answer my cry, thou God who vindicatest me,
Who didst give me relief when I was in distress,
Be gracious to me now, and hear my prayer.

O men, how long shall my honor be defamed,
How long will you love falsehood, and seek lies?
But know that the Lord has shown me wonderful kindness,
The Lord hears my cry when I call to him.

Many say, 'O that he would give us prosperity,
Lift up the light of thy countenance on us.'
O Lord, thou hast put joy in my heart,
More joy than when there is much grain and wine.
In peace I lie down and slumber,
For thou, O Lord, makest me dwell alone in safety.

289. A Petition for Protection

O Lord, condescend to hear me,
Answer me, for I am poor and afflicted.
Preserve my life, for I am faithful,
Save thy servant who trusts in thee.
Thou art my God, be gracious to me,
For to thee do I call all the day.
Make glad the soul of thy servant,
Because for thee, O Lord, I am longing,
For thou, Lord, art kind and forgiving,
Full of love for all who call on thee.

Listen, O Lord, to my prayer,
And heed my supplication.
I call upon thee when in trouble,
For I know that thou wilt answer me.
None of the gods are like thee, O Lord,
And there are no works like thine.
All nations whom thou hast made
Shall come and bow down before thee,
And shall glorify thy name, O Lord,
For thou art great and doest wonders;
Thou art God alone.

Teach me thy way, O Lord,
That I may walk in thy truth;
Let my heart rejoice in revering thee.
I will thank thee with all my heart,
And will honor thy name forever,
For great is thy love toward me,
From the depths of the grave thou hast saved me.

O God, the scornful rise up against me,
And a mob of violent men seek my life,
And for thee they have no regard.
But thou art a God of mercy and goodness,
Patient and rich in love and faithfulness.

Turn unto me and be gracious, O Lord,
And grant thy strength to thy servant,
Save the son of one who served thee,
Show me a favorable sign,
That those who hate me may see with shame
That thou, O Lord, dost help and comfort me.

290. The Prayer of the Supreme Sufferer

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,
And art far from helping me when I implore thee?
I call by day, but thou dost not answer me,
And in the night I find no rest.

Yet thou, O my God, art the Holy One,
Enthroned on Israel's songs of praise.
In thee did our fathers trust,
They trusted, and thou didst deliver them;
To thee they cried and escaped,
In thee they trusted and were not ashamed.

But I am a worm and no man,
Taunted by men and despised by the people,
Whoever sees me derides me,

They sneer and shake their head, saying:
'He depended upon Jehovah, let him save him,
Let him rescue him, for he is pleased with him!'

But it was thou who tookest me from the womb,
Who madest me feel safe on my mother's breast;
On thee I was cast from birth,
Thou art my God from my mother's womb.
Be not far from me, for I am in distress,
Draw near, for there is no helper.

Many bulls surround me on all sides,
The strong bulls of Bashan encircle me,
They face me with gaping jaws,
Like lions roaring for prey.
I am poured out like water,
And all of my bones are loosened.
My heart has become like wax,
It is melted within my breast.

My throat is dry as a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws.
In the dust of death thou dost lay me,
For many dogs surround me.
A gang of knaves encircles me,
They gnaw my hands and my feet.
I can count all my bones,
While they look, they gloat over me;
They divide my garments among them,
And for my clothing cast lots.

Be not far off, O Lord,
O thou my strength, hasten to my help;
Deliver my life from the sword,
My only one from the claws of the dog.
Rescue me from the mouth of the lion,
From the horns of the wild oxen save me.

I will tell of thy fame to my people,
And praise thee in the midst of the assembly.
You who revere the Lord, praise him,
All descendants of Jacob, honor him,
All you Israelites stand in awe of him;
For he has not turned in horror
From the affliction of him who is afflicted,
Nor has he hidden his face from him,
But he has listened to his cry for help.

In the great congregation I praise thee,
I will pay my vows before those who revere him.
The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
The followers of the Lord shall praise him,
Their hearts shall be quickened forever.

All peoples of earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,
And all the families of the nations bow down before him,
For dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules the nations!
Surely him alone all the prosperous of earth shall worship,
Before him all those about to go down to the dust shall bow.
Posterity shall serve him and tell of him to future generations,
And proclaim his righteous deeds to a people yet unborn.

291. The Prayer of Faith

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the protector of my life; whom shall I dread?
When evil-doers come to attack me and devour my flesh,
Those who are my adversaries and foes stumble and fall.
Though a host should encamp against me, my heart will not fear,
Though war should be declared against me, even then will I trust.

One thing I ask from the Lord, for that will I seek:
To dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
To see the glory of the Lord and inquire in his temple,
For he hides me in his covert in the day of trouble;
He conceals me in the shelter of his tent, he lifts me up
on a rock.
Now he will lift me above the enemies about me.
I will offer sacrifices in his tent with loud rejoicing,
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.

292. The Petition of a Faithful Servant of God

With thee, O Lord, I seek refuge,
Let me never be put to shame.
Because of thy righteousness rescue me,
Hearken to my plea,
Deliver me quickly, O Lord,
Be to me a rock of refuge,
A house of defense to save me;
For thou art my rock and my fortress,
For thy name's sake lead and guide me.
Bring me out of the snare they have laid for me,
For thou thyself art my refuge.
In thy keeping I place my life;
Thou hast ransomed me, O Lord, thou faithful God!

I hate those who worship false idols,
But in thee, O Lord, I trust.
I will exult and rejoice in thy love,
Because thou hast seen my affliction,
Thou hast known my soul's distress,
Thou hast not surrendered me to my foe,
But hast set my feet in a broad place.

In thee, O Lord, do I trust,
'Thou art my God,' I say;
My fate is in thy keeping,

Save me from my foes and pursuers,
Let thy face shine upon thy servant,
Save me because of thy love.

O Lord, how great is the goodness
Thou hast in store for those who revere thee,
Which thou showest to all mankind,
To those who trust in thee!
Thou dost shelter them under thy wings,
Away from the plottings of men;
Thou keepest them safe in a shelter,
Away from the strife of tongues.

Blessed is the Lord,
For the wonderful love he has shown me.
For in my alarm I said:
'I have been cut off from thy presence.'
But thou heardest my loud supplication,
When to thee I cried for help.

Love the Lord, all you his faithful ones,
For the Lord preserves the faithful,
But punishes the arrogant to the uttermost.
Let your hearts be strong and courageous,
All you who wait for the Lord.

293. A Prayer of Thanksgiving

I extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast delivered me,
For thou hast not let my foes rejoice over me.
My God, I cried to thee for help,
And thou, O Lord, hast healed my ills,
From the dead, O Lord, thou hast raised me,
From among the dying restored me to life.

Sing praise to the Lord, you who love him,
And give thanks to his holy name,
For his anger lasts only a moment,

But his favor endures for a lifetime.
Weeping may tarry at night,
But the morning brings shouts of joy.

When all went well, I said
That I should never be moved,
O Lord, by thy favor I stood
As firm as the stalwart mountains;
But when thou didst hide thy face,
I was filled with utter dismay.

Then to thee, O God, I called,
To the Lord I prayed this prayer:
'What profit is there in my blood
If I go down to the grave?
Can the dust give praise to thee?
Can it make known thy faithfulness?
Hear, O Lord, and be gracious,
And come to my help, O Lord.'

Thou hast turned my mourning to dancing,
And thou hast stripped off my sackcloth,
Thou hast clothed me instead with joy,
That my heart may sing praise to thee,
That it may not be silent, O Lord, my God,
That forever I may give thanks to thee.

294. The Prayer of an Exile

Hear my cry, O God,
Give heed unto my prayer.
From the ends of the earth I call
To thee, when my heart is faint.
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I,
For thou hast been my place of refuge,
A tower of strength against the enemy.

I would be a guest in thy tent forever,
Finding refuge under thy wings.

For thou, O God, hearest my vows,
Granting the desires of those who revere thee.

Prolong the life of the ruler,
May he live throughout all generations,
May he remain before the Lord forever;
May love and fidelity keep him!
Then will I praise thee forever,
Paying my vows each day.

295. A Missionary Prayer

O God, be gracious and bless us,
Let the light of thy face shine upon us,
That thy way may be known upon earth,
Thy saving power among the nations.

May the peoples praise thee, O God,
May all peoples give thee thanks,
Let the nations rejoice and shout joyfully,
For thou governest the peoples with justice,
And guidest the nations on earth.

May the peoples praise thee, O God,
May all peoples give thee thanks.
The earth has yielded her increase,
For the Lord, our God, has blessed us;
May all mankind revere him.

296. A Petition for an Upright Ruler

Give the ruler thy judgment, O God,
And the ruler's son thy sense of right,
That he may judge thy people righteously,
And thine afflicted ones with justice;
That the heights may bear welfare to the people,
That the hills may yield the fruits of justice;
That he may guard the rights of the downtrodden,

And deliver the sons of the needy,
And completely crush the oppressor!

May he live as long as the sun,
While the moon shines from age to age.
May he descend like rain on the meadow,
Like rain-drops that water the earth.
In his days may justice flourish,
And prosperity without measure,
Till the moon shall cease to shine.
May he rule from sea to sea,
From the river to the ends of the earth.
May his foes bow down before him,
And his enemies lick the dust.

May the kings of Tarshish and the isles bring gifts,
The kings of Sheba and Seba pay tribute.
May all kings pay him homage,
And all the nations serve him.
For he saves the needy who cry,
The afflicted and him with no helper.
He pities the poor and the weak,
And saves the life of the destitute.
From extortion and violence he saves them,
For their blood in his sight is precious.

Long may he live;
And may gold of Sheba be given him.
May prayer be made constantly for him,
And daily may he be blessed!

May the land have abundance of grain,
On the hilltops may its fruit flourish like Lebanon;
And may the men of the city
Blossom as wild vegetation.

May his renown endure forever,
May his fame flourish as long as the sun.

May all nations ask a like blessing,
And all races of earth call him happy!

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
He who alone performs wonders,
Blessed be his glorious name forever,
Let the whole earth be filled with his glory.

297. A Petition for the Renewal of God's Favor

Thou hast favored thy land, O Lord,
Thou hast brought back the captives of Jacob,
Thou hast pardoned the guilt of thy people,
Thou hast forgiven all their sin,
Thou hast withdrawn all thy wrath,
And turned away the heat of thine anger.

Restore us, O God, our Savior,
Put away thy displeasure toward us.
Wilt thou forever be angry,
Prolonging thy wrath to all ages?
Wilt thou not restore us to life,
That thy people may rejoice in thee?
Show us thy love, O Lord,
And grant us thy salvation.

I would hear what the Lord will speak,
For he will speak peace to his people,
And to those who truly love him.
He will surely save those who revere him,
That glory may dwell in our land.

Love and truth meet together,
Peace and righteousness kiss each other.
Truth springs up from the earth,
And righteousness looks down from heaven.
The Lord shall give what is good,

And our land shall yield its increase.
Righteousness goes before him,
And peace shall follow in his footsteps.

298. A Pilgrim's Prayer for the Prosperity of Jerusalem

I was glad when they said to me:
'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'
I am glad when our feet are standing
Within your gates, O Jerusalem.

O Jerusalem, built up anew,
As a city that is compact together,
To which the tribes go as pilgrims,
Even the tribes of the Lord,
As the law has prescribed for Israel,
To give thanks to the name of the Lord;
For there stand the thrones of justice,
The thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,
And that those who love you may prosper.
May peace be within your walls,
And prosperity within your palaces,
For the sake of my brothers and friends,
I now say: 'Peace be within you.'
For the sake of the house of the Lord
I pray for your well-being.

299. A Plea for Complete Forgiveness and Restoration

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to thy loving-kindness,
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies,
Blot out all my transgressions,
Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,

And cleanse me from my sin.
For well do I know my misdeeds,
And my sin is always before me.
Against thee, thee only have I sinned,
And done what is wrong in thy sight;
Therefore thou art right when thou speakest,
And just when thou pronouncest thy judgment.

Verily I was born in iniquity,
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
Yet thou desirest truth in the heart,
In my inner soul thou wouldst teach me wisdom.
Cleanse me with hyssop that I may be clean,
Wash me whiter than snow.
Fill me with joy and gladness,
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
Hide thy face from my sins,
And blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence,
Withdraw not thy holy spirit from me.
Give me back the glad sense of thy help,
And with a willing spirit sustain me.

Then I will teach sinners thy ways,
And wrong-doers shall turn unto thee.
Save me from bloodshed, O God,
That my tongue may sing of thy righteousness.
O Lord, open thou my lips,
That my mouth may declare thy praise!

For thou takest no pleasure in sacrifice,
No delight in gifts of burnt-offering.
The sacrifices pleasing to thee
Are a broken and contrite spirit.

300. A Prayer that God may be Gracious to Man

O Lord, thou hast been our abode throughout all generations,
Before the mountains were made,
Or the earth and the world were born,
From eternity to eternity thou art God.

Thou turnest man back to dust,
And sayest, 'Return, O sons of men.'
For a thousand years in thy sight
Are as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night.

Thou sweepest them away as in sleep,
Or as grass which grows up in the morning;
In the morning it thrives and sprouts,
In the evening it fades and withers.

For under thine anger we perish,
By the heat of thy wrath we are troubled.
Thou hast set our sins before thee,
Our secrets in the light of thy presence.
For our days are spent under thy wrath,
And we end our years as a sigh.

Our years are threescore and ten,
Or, by reason of strength, perhaps fourscore;
Yet their duration is but labor and sorrow,
For it is soon gone, and we fly away.

Who knows the power of thine anger,
Who stands in awe of thy wrath?
So teach us to number our days,
That we may acquire a wise mind.

Return, O Lord; how long?
And relent concerning thy servants.

Oh, satisfy us early with thy love,
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad for the days in which thou hast afflicted us,
For the years in which we have seen adversity.
Let thy deeds be revealed to thy servants,
And show thy glory to their children.
Let the favor of our God be upon us,
And prosper thou the work of our hands.

PSALMS OF MEDITATION

301. The Prosperity of the Upright and the End of the Wicked

Happy is the man
Who follows not the counsel of the wicked,
Nor takes his stand with sinners,
Nor sits among the scoffers,
But delights in the law of the Lord,
And day and night meditates on it.
For he is like a tree planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in due season,
Whose leafage never withers,
And all that he does shall prosper.

Not so the wicked!
They are like the chaff driven by the wind.
So the wicked shall not rise up at the judgment,
Nor sinners where the righteous are gathered;
For the Lord directs the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

302. The Psalmist's Decalogue

O Lord, who may be a guest in thy tent?
Who may dwell on thy holy hill?

He who lives blamelessly and does right,
And speaks the truth in his heart,
Who utters no slander with his tongue,
Who does no wrong to his friend,
Who makes no charge against his neighbor;
In whose sight the vile are despised,
But he honors those who revere the Lord.
He keeps his oath at all costs,

His money he puts not out to usury,
And cannot be bribed to injure the innocent.

He who does this can never be moved.

303. The Joy that Comes with Consciousness of Forgiveness

Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin
is pardoned!
Happy he to whom the Lord imputes no guilt,
And whose spirit is free from deceit.

When I kept silent my bones wasted with my endless
groaning,
For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me,
My moisture was dried up as with the burning heat of
summer.
But when I made known to thee my sin,
And no longer concealed my guilt,
And said, 'I will confess my transgression';
Thou forgavest my guilt and my sin.
So let every one who is faithful
Pray to thee in time of distress.
When mighty waters overflow, they shall not reach him.

Thou art my hiding-place, thou dost protect me from
trouble,
Thou surroundest me with glad songs of deliverance:
'I will teach you and instruct you in the way you should
go,
I will counsel you with mine eye on you.
Be not as the horse or the mule, without intelligence,
Who must be curbed by bridle and bit.'

Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
But love surrounds him who trusts in the Lord.
Then rejoice, exult in the Lord, O you righteous,
And sing for joy, all you upright in heart!

304. The Fate of the Upright and of the Wicked

Be not disturbed because of the wicked,
Nor be envious of those who do wrong;
For like grass they shall quickly wither,
And fade like the green vegetation.

Trust in the Lord and do right,
Live in the land and act with fidelity.
Then the Lord shall be your delight,
He will grant you your heart's desire.

Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust in him, and he will work with you,
He will bring to light your integrity,
And make it as clear as the noonday.

Be resigned to the Lord and wait for him,
Do not fret because of the prosperous,
The man who accomplishes his evil plans.

Refrain from anger and forsake your wrath;
Be not incensed, it leads only to evil;
For evil-doers shall be cut off,
They who hope in the Lord shall inherit the earth.

Yet a little while, and the wicked shall vanish;
You will look at his place and he will be gone!
But the modest shall inherit the earth,
And delight in overwhelming prosperity.

Better is the righteous man's little
Than the great abundance of the wicked.
For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
But the Lord protects the righteous.

The Lord directs the days of the upright,
And their inheritance shall remain forever.

They shall not be shamed in the day of calamity,
And in time of famine they shall be satisfied.

But the wicked shall surely perish;
The Lord's foes, like a brand in a furnace,
Shall vanish, and go up in smoke.
The wicked borrows and does not repay;
But the righteous is charitable and gives.
Those blest by him shall inherit the land,
And those cursed by him shall be destroyed.

A man's steps are directed by the Lord,
He establishes him of whose acts he approves,
For should he fall, he shall not go headlong,
For the Lord will hold him by the hand.

I have been young and now I am old,
But I never have seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his descendants begging for bread.

305. Death the Great Leveller

Why should I be afraid in evil days,
When surrounded by wicked deceivers,
Who put their faith in their wealth,
And boast of their boundless riches?
No man can redeem himself,
Nor give to God his ransom;
For the redemption of his life is too costly
To keep him alive forever,
So as never to see the grave,
For he shall see it. Wise men die,
Both fool and the brutish perish,
And abandon their wealth to others.
The grave is their home forever,
Their abode for all generations,
Though they name lands after themselves.
Men do not retain their honor,
But are like the beasts that perish.

This is the fate of the conceited,
And of those who are pleased with their wealth:
Like sheep they descend to the grave,
Death shall be their shepherd;
They go straight down to the grave,
And their forms waste away in hell.
But God will redeem my life,
And snatch me from the power of the grave.
So fear not when a man grows rich,
When the pomp of his house increases;
For when he dies he can take nothing with him,
His pomp he must leave behind him.
Though in life he congratulate himself,
And be lauded for his prosperity,
He must join the race of his fathers,
Who shall never see daylight again.
Men do not retain their honor,
But are like the beasts that perish.

306. The Consolation of the Innocent

Surely God is good to the upright,
To those who are pure in heart.
My feet were almost gone from under me,
My steps had nearly slipped,
For I was envious of the arrogant,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
For they have no pains to endure,
Their bodies are full of strength;
The trouble of mortals they do not share,
They never are afflicted as other men.
So they wear their pride like a necklace,
Violence clothes them as a garment,
Crime exudes from their fatness,
And their minds overflow with conceit.
They scoff and speak of evil,
They haughtily plot oppression,
They direct their speech against heaven,
And their tongue dictates about the earth.

Therefore the people resort to them,
And pour out all that is in their heart.
They say, 'How does God know?
And has the Most High any knowledge?
See, such as these are the wicked,
In continual ease they add to their wealth!'

Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure,
And washed my hands in innocence,
For all day long I am plagued,
And every morning my torture is renewed.
But when I pondered that I might understand this,
It seemed to me a wearisome task,
Until I penetrated the mysteries of God,
And considered the end of the wicked.
Thou dost set them in slippery places,
Thou hurlest them down to destruction.
How they are ruined in a moment!
They are gone, overwhelmed by terrors.
Like a dream when one awakens, O Lord,
So their phantom is despised by one awake.

Surely my mind was embittered,
And I felt pain in my heart,
I was indeed dull and ignorant,
Like a stupid beast before thee.
Yet I am with thee continually;
Thou dost hold fast my right hand,
Thou guidest me by thy counsel,
And thou wilt afterward take me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but thee?
On earth I have no joy beside thee.
My body and my heart grow faint,
But God is my Rock and my portion forever!

307. The Principles that Should Guide a Ruler

I will sing of love and justice, praising thee, O Lord.
I will give heed to the way that is right. O when wilt thou come to me?
Within my own house I will walk with clear conscience.
I will never tolerate in my presence a thing that is base;
I hate a crooked act; it shall not cling to me.
Far from me be every false motive; I will know no evil.

Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him will I destroy,
Whoever has a haughty mien and a proud heart I will not tolerate.
My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me.
He who lives a blameless life, that one shall serve me,
Whoever practises deceit shall not dwell in my house;
He who tells lies shall not remain in my presence.
Zealously will I destroy all the wicked in the land,
That I may cut off from the city of the Lord all evil-doers.

308. The Importance of Keeping the Law

Happy are those who live blameless lives, following the law of the Lord!
Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him whole-heartedly,
And commit no crime, but live as he would have them.
It is thou who hast given thy precepts, that they may be zealously kept.
Oh that my habits were firmly established, to keep thy statutes!
Then I should never be ashamed, when I consider thy commands.
I thank thee with a sincere heart, as I learn thy just judgments,
I will keep thy statutes; O do not completely forsake me.

How can a young man keep his life pure? By following thy teachings.
With all my heart have I sought thee, let me not stray from thy commands.
In my heart have I treasured thy word, that I may not sin against thee.
Blessed art thou, O Lord! Teach me thy statutes.
With my lips have I rehearsed all the judgments of thy mouth;
I rejoice in following thy charges as much as in all riches;
I will meditate on thy precepts and regard thy rules of life;
In thy statutes I take delight, I will not forget thy word.

Deal generously with thy servant that I may live and keep thy word;
Open thou my eyes that I may see wondrous things in thy law.
Teach me the way of thy statutes, O Lord, and I will faithfully keep them;
Enlighten me, that I may keep thy law and I will observe it with all my heart.
Guide me in the way of thy commands, for in it do I delight.
Incline my heart to thy decrees, and not to the desire for gain.
Turn my eyes from vain desires, revive me by thy word.
Confirm for thy servant thy promise to those who revere thee.

Thy word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path.
Thou who art my shelter and shield; for thy word do I wait.
Marvellous are thy decrees; therefore I gladly obey them.
The revelation of thy word gives light, insight to the simple.
Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just thy decisions;

The decrees thou hast issued are righteous and perfectly true.
Great peace have they who love thy law, they never have cause for stumbling.

309. The Source of All Prosperity

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.
Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman wakens in vain.
It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit down at your meal late,
And so eat the bread of toil; for he gives to his loved ones sleep.

Children too are a gift from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.
As arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of youth.
Happy indeed is the man whose quiver is full of them,
He shall not be put to shame when he argues with foes in the court.

310. The Happiness of God's People

Our sons are like saplings, grown tall in their youth;
Our daughters like corner-pillars, carved as in a palace.
Our garners are full, affording all kinds of supplies.
The sheep in our fields increase by thousands and tens of thousands.
Our cattle are great with young, strong to labor, and do not break down from toil.
There is no going forth to war, no outcries on our streets!
Happy the people that enjoys this good fortune,
Happy the people whose God is the Lord!

311. The Joyous Lot of the Upright

They who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved.
Jerusalem stands forever, encircled by mountains;
So the Lord is round about his people, now and evermore.

Happy are all who revere the Lord, living as he directs.
You shall eat the fruit of your toil, happy and prosperous.
Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine, in the inner room of your house;
Your sons like young olive-trees, round about your table.

Even thus shall the man be blessed who reveres the Lord.
The Lord shall bless you from Zion all the days of your life,
You shall see your children's children, and the prosperity of Jerusalem.

See how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head that ran down on the beard,
Even on Aaron's beard, that flowed over the collar of his garment.
Like the dew of Mount Hermon, that descends on the mountains of Zion;
For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

312. The Security of Him who Trusts in God

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
Who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
Who say to the Lord, 'Thou art my refuge,
And my fortress, my God in whom I trust,'
He will surely deliver you from the snare,

When entrapped from the destructive pit.
With his pinions he will cover you,
And under his wings you may hide.

His faithfulness is a shield and defense,
You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
Nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand,
But it shall not come near unto you.
You need but look with your eyes,
To see how the wicked are punished.

Because the Lord is your refuge,
And you have made the Most High your abode,
There shall no evil befall you,
No plague come near your tent;
For he will give his angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways;
They shall bear you up on their hands,
Lest you strike your foot on a stone.
You shall tread on the lion and adder,
You shall trample on the young lion and dragon.

'Because of his love for me I will deliver him,
I will exalt him, for he knows my name.
He shall call upon me and I will answer him,
In time of trouble I will be with him,
I will deliver him and bring him honor,
With long life will I satisfy him,
And show him my power to save.'

THE TEACHINGS OF THE WISE

PROVERBS

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE WISE

313. The Aims and Methods of the Wise

Is not Wisdom calling,
And Reason crying aloud?—
That men may get wisdom and discipline,
May understand words of discernment,
May receive training in wise conduct,
In that which is right, just, and honorable;
That shrewdness may be taught to the simple,
And knowledge and a purpose to youth;
That the wise man may hear and grow wiser,
And that the intelligent man may be guided
In interpreting proverbs and parables,
The words of the wise and their riddles.

On the prominent heights by the way,
In the midst of the highways she stands,
By the gates that lead into the city,
At the entrance she cries aloud:
'To you, O men, I call,
My appeal is to all mankind.

O simple ones, learn to be prudent,
And you who are foolish, gain insight,
Give heed; what I speak is important,
And what my lips utter is right.

All is clear to the man of sense,
And right to those who gain knowledge.
Choose instruction rather than silver,

And knowledge rather than gold,
For wisdom is better than corals,
And with her no treasures compare.

With me are counsel and skill,
Insight and power are mine,
By me kings do reign,
And rulers decree what is just,
By me officials govern,
And nobles rule over the earth.

Those who love me, I love,
Those who seek earnestly, find me,
With me are riches and honor,
Lordly wealth and prosperity,
My fruit is better than gold,
My revenue than choicest silver.
I walk in the way that is right,
And keep to the pathways of justice,
Endowing with wealth those who love me,
And filling their treasuries full.'

314. The Rôle of Wisdom in the Universe

The Lord formed me as his first creation,
The earliest of his works of old.
In the primeval past was I fashioned,
At the first, before earth existed,
When there were no depths, I was born;
When there were no springs full of water,
Ere the mountains were set in their places,
And before there were hills I was born,
Or ever the earth and the fields had been made,
Or the first of the dust of the world.

When God set up the heavens, I was there,
And when he stretched the vault over the deep,
When he made firm the skies above,

And fixed the fountains of the deep,
And when the Lord set to the sea its bounds,
So that its waters should not transgress his commands,
When he laid the foundations of the earth,
Then I was by him as a foster-child;
And I was his delight from day to day,
Playing before him at all times,
Playing upon his habitable earth.

My delight is to be with mankind;
So now, my sons, listen to me,
Hear instruction that you may be wise,
And reject it not.

Happy the man who hears me,
And they who follow my counsel,
Watching daily at my gates,
And waiting at my door-posts.
For he who finds me finds life,
And wins the favor of the Lord.
But he who misses me wrongs himself,
For all who hate me love death.

315. The Allurements of Wisdom and of Folly

Wisdom has built her house,
She has set up her seven pillars,
She has killed her cattle and mixed her wine,
She also has spread her table.
She has sent her maidens to proclaim
On the prominent heights in the city:
'Let him who is simple, turn in!'
To him who lacks insight she says:
'Come now and eat my bread,
And drink of the wine I have mixed!'
Abandon your folly and live,

And walk with the guidance of reason!
For by me will your days be prolonged,
And the years of your life will be lengthened.

The woman Folly is clamorous,
Seductive, and knows no shame.
She sits at the door of her house,
At a prominent place in the city,
Calling to those who pass by,
Who are going right on in their way:
'Let him who is simple, turn in!'
To him who lacks insight she says:
'Stolen waters are sweet,
And bread eaten in secret is pleasant!'
But he knows not that phantoms are there,
And her guests in the bottomless pit.

316. The Rewards of Heeding the Counsel of the Wise

My son, if you heed my words,
And store my commands in your mind,
Attentively listening to wisdom,
Applying your mind unto reason,
If you will but seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures,
You shall then understand true religion,
And gain a knowledge of God.
For wisdom shall enter your mind,
And knowledge shall be pleasant to you,
Discretion shall watch over you,
And understanding shall guard you,
To save you from doing wrong,
From men whose speech is perverting,
Who abandon the paths of right,
To walk in ways that are dark,
Who rejoice in doing wrong,
And take pleasure in evil acts.

Wisdom will deliver you from the strange woman,
From the harlot with words that entice,
Who has left the husband of her youth,
And forgotten the sacred covenant.
For her house leads down to death,
And her paths to the place of the dead.
None who go in to her return,
Or attain the paths of life.

Happy the man who finds wisdom,
And he who gains understanding.
In her right hand is long life,
In her left are riches and honor.
Her ways are pleasant ways,
And all her paths are peaceful.
She gives life to those who grasp her,
They are happy who hold her fast.
You shall then go your way securely,
And your foot shall never stumble.
When you sit you shall not be afraid,
When you lie down, your sleep shall be sweet.

317. The Nature of God

By wisdom the Lord founded the earth,
By understanding established the heavens,
By his knowledge the depths are opened,
And the skies deposit the dew.

The rich and the poor meet together,
The Lord is the maker of them all.
The lower world lies open before him,
How much more then the hearts of men!
The eyes of the Lord are all seeing,
Keeping watch on both wicked and good.
A man thinks all he does is right,
But the Lord tests the motive.

There is no wisdom nor insight,
Nor counsel against the Lord.
The horse is prepared for the battle,
But victory depends on the Lord.
There are many plans in a man's mind,
But the counsel of the Lord shall stand.

A man plans the way in his mind,
But the Lord directs his steps.
Many seek for the ruler's favor,
But the Lord decides each man's fate.

The Lord detests a false balance,
But a just balance is his delight.
To do what is just and right
Is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.
The conduct of the wicked is abhorrent to him,
But he loves the man eager to do right.

The Lord detests the evil-minded,
But is well pleased with him who lives uprightly.

The sacrifice of the wicked is abhorrent to the Lord,
But the prayer of the upright is a delight to him!
The Lord holds aloof from the wicked,
But hears the prayer of the upright.
Lying lips are abhorrent to the Lord,
But they who deal honestly are his delight.

There are six things that the Lord hates,
Yes, seven are abhorrent to him:
Haughty eyes and a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
A mind that devises wicked schemes,
Feet that make haste to do evil,
A false witness who breathes out lies,
And he who sows strife among brothers.

318. God the Protector of the Upright

The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked,
But he blesses the home of him who does right.
Surely he scoffs at the scoffers,
But to the humble he ever shows favor.

The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,
But he disappoints the desire of the wicked.
The Lord is a stronghold to him who lives rightly,
But he brings destruction to the workers of iniquity.

Rob not the poor because they are poor,
Nor oppress the poor at the city gate,
For the Lord will plead their cause,
And rob those who deprive them of life.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower,
To which the righteous runs and is safe.

Every word of God is tried;
He is a shield to those who trust him.

Say not, 'I will be revenged for a wrong';
Wait for the Lord, he will save you.
For the Lord gives wisdom,
From his mouth come knowledge and insight;
He stores up sound wisdom for the upright,
He is a shield to those who live blamelessly,
That he may guard the course of justice,
And protect the way of his faithful ones.

319. Man's Universal Characteristics

As iron sharpens iron,
So a man sharpens the face of his friend.
As in water face answers to face,
So the heart of man to man.

Man's spirit is the lamp of the Lord,
Searching all the chambers of the soul.

Every heart knows its own sorrow,
And no other shares its joy.
Even in laughter the heart may be sad,
And the end of joy may be sorrow.

Hope deferred makes the heart of man sick,
But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.
As cold water to a thirsty man,
So is good news from a far country.

Many a man proclaims his own kindness.
But a trustworthy man who can find?

Anxiety in a man's mind depresses it,
But a kind word makes it happy.
A man's spirit sustains him in sickness,
But who can raise up a broken spirit?

A tranquil mind is the life of the body,
But jealousy rots the bones.
A joyful heart makes a cheerful countenance,
But by inward sorrow the spirit is broken.
A joyful heart is good medicine,
But a broken spirit dries up the bones.

320. Advantages of Old Age and Youth

The glory of young men is their strength,
And the beauty of old men the hoary head.
The hoary head is a crown of glory,
When acquired by upright living.

Childrens' children are the crown of old men,
And the glory of children is their fathers.

321. The Law of Consequences

The integrity of the upright shall guide them,
But the crookedness of the faithless shall ruin them.
He who lives uprightly lives securely,
But he whose ways are crooked shall suffer.
Misfortune pursues the sinners,
But good fortune rewards the righteous.

Lie not in wait against the home of the just,
Do not rob the place where he rests;
For seven times the just falls and rises.
The wicked stumble in adversity,
But a just man has hope when he dies.

Fret not yourself because of evil-doers,
Nor be envious of the wicked;
For there is no future for the bad man,
The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

Blessings are on the head of the just,
But grief shall seal the mouth of the wicked.

The memory of the just shall be blessed,
But the name of the wicked shall rot.

322. The Trusting Attitude toward God

Reverence for the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
But the foolish despise wisdom and discipline.
Reverence is the result of wise instruction,
And before honor goes humility.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
Depend not on your own understanding;
In all you do know him intimately,
And he will direct your paths.

Be not wise in your own eyes.
Revere the Lord, and turn from sin.
Then you will have health of body
And your bones will be refreshed.

Honor the Lord with your wealth,
With the best of all your income.
Then your barns will be filled with grain,
And your vats overflow with wine.

A greedy man stirs up strife,
But he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.
Entrust what you do to the Lord,
Then your plans will succeed.

323. The Fool and the Price of His Folly

Wisdom is the goal of a man of understanding,
But the eyes of a fool are at the ends of the earth.
Wisdom is beyond the reach of a fool,
He does not open his mouth at the gates.

It is as sport to a fool to commit a crime,
And so is wisdom to a man of sense.
Though you should pound a fool in a mortar,
You will not remove his foolishness from him.

A man's folly brings ruin upon him,
And then he rages against the Lord.

As a ring of gold in a hog's mouth,
So is a fair woman without discretion.
A wise woman builds up her household,
But the foolish with her own hand tears it down.

A fool's mouth is his destruction,
And his lips are a snare to him.
Wise men obtain honor,
But disgrace is the lot of the fool.
He who brings trouble to his home shall inherit the wind,
And he who is foolish shall become slave to the wise.

324. The Importance of the Receptive Attitude

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge,
But the fool does not comprehend.

A fool's conduct seems right in his sight,
But a wise man listens to counsel.
A fool despises his father's correction,
But he who regards reproof acts prudently.

Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate you,
Reprove a wise man and he will love you.

Apply your mind to instruction,
And your ears to words of knowledge.
Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That you may be wise in your later life.

Counsel in a man's mind is like deep water,
But a man of sense will draw it out.
Hold fast instruction, let it not go;
Keep it, for it is your life.

My son, reject not the discipline of the Lord,
And do not spurn his reproof,
For whom he loves he reproves,
Even as a father the son in whom he delights.
He who rejects correction despises his own self,
But he who listens to reproof gains understanding.

325. The Value of Education

He who gains knowledge is a friend to himself,
He who cherishes insight shall prosper.
Wisdom is better than gold,
And insight more desirable than silver.

The tongues of the wise dispense knowledge,
But the mouths of fools pour out folly.
The mind of the wise guides his mouth,
And adds persuasiveness to his lips.
Good sense is rewarded with favor,
But the conduct of the faithless destroys them.

By wisdom a house is built,
By understanding it is established,
And by knowledge the chambers are filled
With all precious and pleasing stores.

A wise man is better than a strong man,
And a man who has knowledge than he who has strength.

Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,
And the years of your life shall be many.
I teach you the way of wisdom,
I lead you in the paths of uprightness.
When you walk you will not be impeded,
And if you run, you will not stumble.

326. The Responsibilities of Parents to Their Children

Train a child in the way he should go,
When he is old he will not depart from it.
Correct your son, and he will bring you comfort,
And give you exquisite delight.
Better is open rebuke
Than love that is hidden.

A righteous man who lives a blameless life,—
Blessed are his children after him!

327. The Duties of Children to Parents

My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And forsake not the teaching of your mother;
They shall be a chaplet of beauty for your head,
And a necklace about your neck.
Listen to your father who begat you,
And despise not your mother when she is old.
He who obeys instruction is an intelligent son.
But he who makes friends of profligates brings disgrace
on his father.

He who heeds correction has the assurance of life,
But he who disregards reproof is in danger of going astray.
He, who though often reproved, persists in his course,
Shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.

He who robs father or mother,
Saying, 'There is no wrong in it,'
Is like him who is a destroyer.
He who curses his father or mother,
His lamp shall go out in the blackest of darkness.

A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son despises his mother.
A foolish son is a grief to his father,
And brings bitterness to her who bore him.

Be wise, my son, and make glad my heart,
That I may answer the one who reproaches me.
Let your father be filled with joy,
And let her who bore you rejoice.

328. The Ideal Wife

A continual dripping on a rainy day
And a quarrelsome woman are alike.
He who would restrain her restrains the wind,
And his hand comes in contact with oil.

A good wife is a crown to her husband,
But a shameless one is as rottenness in his bones.
Houses and riches are an inheritance,
But a prudent wife comes from the Lord.

A good wife, who can find?
She is worth far more than corals.
Her husband trusts her completely,
And has no lack of gain.
She does him good and not harm,
All the days of her life.

She procures wool and flax,
And works willingly with her hands.
She is like the ships of the merchant,
She brings her food from afar.
She rises while yet it is night,
And gives out food to her household.

She examines a field and buys it,
With her earnings she plants a vineyard.
She girds herself with might,

And develops strength in her arms.
She perceives that her profit is good;
Her lamp goes not out at night.

She lays her hands on the distaff,
Her hands take hold of the spindle.
She bestows her goods on the poor,
Extends her hand to the needy.
She fears not snow for her household,
For all her household is clothed in scarlet.
Coverlets she makes for herself,
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

Her husband is known in the council,
When he sits among the rulers of the land.
She makes linen cloth and sells it,
Girdles she delivers to the merchant.

Strength and honor are her clothing,
She laughs at the time to come.

What she says is full of wisdom,
And on her tongue is kindly instruction.
She attends to the interests of her household,
Nor eats the bread of idleness.

Her children rise and bless her,
And her husband praises her, saying:
'Many women have done well,
But you excel them all.'

329. Friendships

Many a man professes friendship,
But who can find one who is trustworthy?
There are some friends who are hurtful,
And there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
Sincere are the wounds of a friend,
But profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

Oil and perfume rejoice the heart,
So does sweet friendship by sincere counsel.
He who covers up a transgression seeks love,
But he who repeats gossip estranges his friend.

A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.

Walk with the wise and you shall be wise,
But the companions of fools shall have trouble.

Clouds and wind and no rain,—
So the man who boasts of gifts ungiven.

330. Neighborliness

Refuse not a service to your neighbor
When it is in your power to do it.
Say not to your neighbor, 'Go, and come again,
And to-morrow I will give, when I have it by me.'

The liberal man shall be prospered,
He who waters shall himself be watered.
He sins who despises his neighbor,
He is happy who pities the poor.

331. The Penalty of Laziness and the Dignity of Labor

The appetite of the laborer labors for him,
For his hunger impels him to work.

The sluggard says, 'A lion is outside!
I shall be killed in the streets!'
As the door turns on its hinges,
So the lazy man turns on his bed.
He dips his hand in the dish,
But does not bring it to his mouth!
The lazy man is wiser in his own opinion,
Than seven who can answer intelligently.
The way of the lazy is hedged in with thorns,
But the path of the diligent is a well-built highway.
Slack management brings only poverty,
But efficiency makes a man rich.

I went by the field of the lazy man,
By the vineyard of him who lacked sense,
It was all overgrown with thorns,
Its surface was covered with nettles,
And its stone wall was broken down.
Then I beheld and reflected,
I saw and received instruction:
A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to rest,
And your poverty comes as a robber,
And your want as a well-armed man.

He who gathers in summer acts sensibly,
He who sleeps in harvest behaves disgracefully.

If you see a man skilled in his business,
He shall stand in the presence of kings,
And not in the presence of obscure men.
Set in order your work without,
Prepare for your work in the field,
And after that build your house.

332. The Causes and Evils of Poverty

Be not one of those who drink wine to excess,
One of the gluttonous eaters of flesh;
For the drunkard and the glutton come to poverty,
And drowsiness clothes one with rags.
He who loves pleasure shall come to want,
And he who loves wine and oil shall not be rich.
He who cultivates his land has plenty of bread,
But he who follows vain things has plenty of poverty.
He who oppresses the poor to increase his own gain,
And he who gives bribes come only to want.
Poverty and shame come to him who shuns knowledge,
But he who heeds reproof is honored.

Go to the ant, O lazy man;
Consider her ways, and be wise;
She having no chief,
Overseer, nor ruler,
Provides her food in the summer,
And gathers supplies in the harvest.

How long will you lie down, O lazy man?
When will you arise from your slumber?
Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty,
Open your eyes and you shall have plenty.

Wealth adds many friends,
But from the poor—his friend draws away!

333. The Acquisition of Wealth

The reward of humility and reverence for the Lord
Is riches and honor and life.
The blessing of the Lord makes a man rich,
And he adds no sorrow with it.

One man disperses his wealth, yet grows rich,
Another withholds too much, yet comes to want.
Wealth quickly acquired grows less,
But what is slowly amassed increases.
In all labor there is profit,
But mere talk tends only to penury.
He who acquires wealth by fraud
Pursues a bubble into deadly snares.
An honest man shall be abundantly blessed,
But haste to get rich shall be punished.

334. The Relative Value of Wealth

Better is a poor man who lives a blameless life
Than one who is dishonest, though he be rich.
Better is a little with righteousness
Than great revenues with injustice.

Better is a modest spirit with the humble,
Than to divide spoil with the arrogant.
A good name is better than great riches,
More highly esteemed than silver and gold.

Treasures unjustly acquired profit nothing,
But righteousness delivers from death.
He who trusts in riches shall fail,
But the upright flourish like a green leaf.

Toil not that you may become rich;
Cease through your own understanding.
Should you set your eyes upon it, it is gone!

For riches take their flight,
Like an eagle that soars toward heaven.
Better is little with reverence for the Lord
Than great treasure and trouble as well.

Two things I ask of thee,
Deny me them not ere I die:
Put far from me deceit and lying,
Give me neither poverty nor riches;
Provide me with the food that I need,
That I may not be filled to the full and deny thee,
And say, 'Who is the Lord?'
Or else be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.

MAN IN HIS LEGAL RELATIONS

335. Duties of Witnesses and Judges

Be not a witness against your neighbor without cause,
And do not deceive with your lips.
Say not: 'I will do to him as he did to me,
I will pay back the man for his deed.'

A reliable witness saves lives,
But he who tells lies is a deceiver.
He who speaks truth promotes justice,
But a false witness sets forth deceit.
A false witness shall not go unpunished,
Nor shall he who tells lies escape.

He who is greedy of gain brings trouble on his own house,
But he who hates bribes shall live.
To show partiality is not good;
For a piece of bread a man may do wrong.
The man who says to the wicked, 'You are right';
Nations will curse him; peoples denounce him;
But it will be well with those who reprove,
The blessing of prosperity shall rest upon them.
He kisses the lips
Who gives an honest answer.

Open your mouth for the dumb;
Uphold the rights of the suffering;
Open your mouth and judge justly;
Give justice to the poor and needy.

336. Dangers of Acting as Bondsman

Be not one of those who pledge themselves,
Or of those who are bondsmen for others' debts;
If you have nothing with which to pay,
Why should your bed be taken from under you?

My son, if you have become bondsman for your neighbor,
If you have pledged yourself for another,
Have snared yourself with your lips,
Trapped yourself by your spoken words,
Then do this, my son, and be free,
For you are in your neighbor's power:
Go, humble yourself,
And importune your neighbor.
Give no sleep to your eyes,
Nor slumber to your eyelids.
Free yourself as a gazelle from the trap,
And as a bird from the hand of the hunter.

337. The Responsibilities of Rulers

The ruler who faithfully judges the poor,—
His throne shall be established forever.
It is a shame for rulers to do wrong;
For a throne is established by doing right.

When the righteous rule the people rejoice,
But when wicked men govern the people sigh.
If a ruler listens to falsehood,
All of his courtiers are wicked.
A ruler by justice establishes a land;
But he who exacts gifts ruins it.

338. The Duties of Citizens

Claim not honor in a ruler's presence,
And stand not in the place of great men;
For it is better that you be told 'Come up here,'
Than that you should be humbled before the prince.

Scornful men kindle discord in a city,
But wise men turn aside wrath.
Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sin is the ruin of peoples.

When the righteous prosper the city rejoices,
But when the wicked perish there is shouting.
By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
But by the counsel of the wicked it is overthrown.
Where there is no wise guidance a people falls,
But in much counsel there is safety.

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD CITIZEN

339. Temperance in Eating and Drinking

If you find honey, eat what is sufficient
That you may not be surfeited and vomit it up.

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is turbulent,
And whoever is misled by it is not wise.
Who cries, 'Woe'? who, 'Alas'?
Who has contentions? Who complains?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
They who linger long over wine,
They who go in to taste mixed wine.

So look not on wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
And glides down smoothly.
At last it bites like a snake,
And stings like an adder.

Then you will see strange things,
And your mind utter distorted ideas.
You will be like one sleeping at sea,
Like one asleep in a violent storm.
'I have been struck, but I feel no pain;
I have been beaten, I am not conscious of it.
When shall I awake from my wine?
I will seek it yet again.'

340. Restraint in Speaking

Do you see a man who speaks before he thinks?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
He who answers before he hears
Covers himself with confusion.

He who is sparing of words has knowledge,
And he who has a cool spirit is a man of sense.
Even a fool, if he keeps still, is considered wise;
Prudent, if he keeps his lips shut.

He who guards his mouth and tongue
Guards himself against trouble.
Life and death are in the power of the tongue;
They who are fond of using it must eat its fruit.

A man has joy from the utterance of his mouth,
And a word in season, how good it is!
A word fitly spoken
Is like golden fruit in silver settings.
Pleasant words are like honeycomb,
Sweet to the taste and healing to the body.

341. The Right Attitude toward Temptation

Happy is the man who is ever on his guard,
But he who is obdurate falls into misfortune.
A prudent man sees evil and hides,
Simpletons go on and are punished.

Let your eyes look right ahead,
And let your gaze be straight before you.
Let the path for your feet be level,
And let all your ways be stable.
Turn not to right nor to left,
Keep your foot far from evil.

Eat not the bread of him who is inhospitable,
Nor desire to share his dainties;
For he is like one who keeps his thoughts to himself.
'Eat and drink,' he says to you,
But his heart is not with you.
The morsel you have eaten you shall spit out,
And you shall lose your sweet words.

As a troubled fountain and a ruined spring,
So is a just man who gives way before the wicked.

342. Control of the Sensual Passions

He who loves wisdom rejoices his father,
But he who associates with harlots wastes his wealth.
Give not your strength to women,
Nor your morals to those who slay kings.
My son, give me your attention,
And pay careful heed to my guidance;
For a harlot is a deep pit,
And an adulteress a narrow well.
She lies in wait as a robber,
And increases the faithless among men.

For the lips of a harlot drop honey,
And her speech is smoother than oil,
But at the last she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.

Her feet lead down to death,
And her steps reach the abode of the dead.
She does not make level the way of life:
Her paths are unstable, though she knows it not.

Now therefore, my son, give heed,
And do not depart from my words.
Keep the course of your life far from her,
And go not near the door of her house;
Lest you give your honor to others,
And the toil of your years to the cruel;
Lest strangers enjoy your wealth,
And your labors pass to an alien.
Lest you groan when your end shall come,
When your flesh and bone are consumed,
And say, 'Alas! I have hated instruction,
And my mind has despised reproof;

I have disregarded the voice of my teachers,
Nor given heed to my instructors!'

Can a man take fire in his bosom
And his clothes not be burned?
Or can one walk on hot coals
And his feet not be scorched?
So with him who goes in to his neighbor's wife;
Whoever touches her shall not go unpunished.

He who commits adultery is devoid of sense.
He destroys himself who does so.
Wounds and dishonor shall he receive,
And his disgrace shall not be wiped away.

343. Control of the Temper

A mild answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.

A man without self-control
Is a ruined city whose wall is broken.
A fool gives vent to his wrath,
But a wise man restrains his anger.
A fool's anger is known at once,
But a sensible man ignores an insult.
A man's wisdom makes him patient,
It is his glory to overlook faults.

The quick-tempered man acts foolishly,
And a malicious plotter is hated.
The patient man shows great wisdom,
But the quick-tempered man acts like a fool!

An irascible man stirs up contention,
But one who is patient allays strife.
He who is patient is better than a warrior,
And he who rules his temper than he who takes a city.

344. Modesty and Purity of Motive

Do not boast what you will do to-morrow,
For you know not what a day may bring forth.
Do you see a man wise in his own opinion?
There is more hope for a fool than for him!

Pride goes before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.
When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
But with the humble is wisdom.

It is not good to eat much honey;
But to seek the glory of others is glorious.
Let another man praise you, not your own mouth;
Some other, and not your own lips.

Guard your heart above all things,
For from it come the sources of life.
The righteousness of the upright saves them,
But the treacherous are trapped by their own craft.

345. Truth and Sincerity

Banish from you crooked speech,
And put deception far from your lips.
The truth endures forever,
But falsehood only a moment.

Sweet to a man is bread gained by fraud,
But later his mouth will be filled with gravel.
He who digs a pit shall fall into it,
And he who rolls a stone shall be crushed.

A lying tongue hates those crushed by it,
And a flattering mouth works ruin.
Like a madman who hurls about

Deadly firebrands and arrows
Is he who deceives his neighbor,
And says, 'I did it in sport.'

A depraved man, a bad character
Goes about making false statements,
Winks with his eyes, scrapes with his feet,
Makes signs with his fingers,
Devises crooked schemes in his mind,
Always sows the seeds of discord.
Therefore calamity shall suddenly overtake him;
In an instant he shall be crushed without remedy.

Folly is a delight to one who lacks sense,
But a man of insight is straightforward.
He who reproves will find more favor
Than he who flatters with his tongue.
A man who flatters his neighbor
Spreads out a net for his feet.

346. A Forgiving and Conciliatory Spirit

He who returns evil for good,
From his house evil shall not depart.

It is an honor for a man to shun strife;
Only a fool is quarrelsome.
Charcoal for embers, and wood for fire,
And a quarrelsome man to kindle strife!

Strive not with a man without cause,
If he has done you no harm.
The beginning of strife is as when one lets out water;
Therefore leave off contention before quarrelling begins.

Better a dry crust with quietness
Than a house full of feasting with strife.

347. Consideration and Love

A just man regards the life of his beast,
But the heart of the wicked is cruel.

He who oppresses the poor reviles his Maker,
But he who has pity on the needy honors him.
He who closes his ear to the cry of the poor,
He also shall call and not be answered.
He who pities the poor, lends to the Lord
And he will repay him for his good deed.

If your enemy hungers, give him food;
If he thirsts, give him water to drink;
For you will heap coals of fire on his head,
And the Lord will reward you.

Hatred stirs up strife,
But love overlooks faults.
Better a dish of herbs where love is,
Than a fatted ox with hate.

Let not love and truth leave you,
Bind them about your neck;
So you will enjoy favor and a good reputation
In the sight of God and man.

ECCLESIASTES

KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST FOR THE REAL VALUES IN LIFE

348. The Eternal Wheel of Things

'Vanity of vanities,' says Koheleth,
'Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

'What gain has man from all his toil,
Which he puts forth under the sun?
The generations come and go,
But the earth remains forever.
The sun rises and the sun sets,
And comes hastening back to his rising place.
Round to the south and circling to the north,
Circling, circling goes the wind,
And on its circuits the wind returns.
All the streams flow into the sea,
And yet the sea is not full;
To the place from which the streams flow,
From there they flow again.

All things are wearied with labor;
No man is able to describe it;
The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor is the ear filled with hearing.
What has been is what shall be,
And what has been done is what shall be done;
There is nothing new under the sun.'

349. The Futility of the Mere Pursuit of Pleasure

I applied my mind to searching out and exploring by wisdom all that is done under heaven. But it is a

wretched task that God has given men as their occupation. I have seen everything that is being done under the sun, and it is nothing but an illusion and a chasing of the wind.

What is crooked cannot be made straight,
What is lacking can never be supplied.
For more wisdom brings more trouble,
And an increase of knowledge an increase of pain.

I said to myself, 'Come now, I will make a test of pleasure and of self-indulgence'; but I found that this too was an illusion. I said of laughter, 'It is madness'; and of pleasure, 'What does it accomplish?'

I found out how to stimulate my body with wine—though my reason was always in control—and how to indulge in folly, until I should discover whether this is a good way for men to spend all the days of their life on earth. I undertook great enterprises; I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself; I had gardens and parks laid out, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I had pools of water constructed to irrigate a forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had others who were born in my house. I also had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all my predecessors in Jerusalem. Besides I amassed silver and gold and the treasures of kings and of provinces. I secured for myself male and female singers, and all that give pleasure to men, including many concubines.

I became far richer than any of my predecessors in Jerusalem; and, my wisdom, too, remained with me. I withheld from myself nothing that I craved; I did not deny myself any pleasure, for I found enjoyment in all my toil, and this was the reward for all my effort. But when I considered all that my hands had made,

and what by toil I had accomplished, it all seemed but an illusion and a chasing of the wind. Nothing under the sun was worth while.

350. The Futility of Mere Wisdom

Then I turned to investigate wisdom and madness and folly; and I saw that wisdom is as superior to folly as light to darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness; and yet I know that the same fate overtakes them all.

So I said to myself, 'The fate of the fool will also overtake me. Of what advantage then is my superior wisdom?' So I said to myself, 'This, too, is an illusion. For the wise man is no more remembered forever than the fool; for in the days to come everyone will be forgotten. Alas! the wise man dies just like the fool!' So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun seemed evil to me, for all is illusion and a chasing of the wind.

351. Koheleth's Conclusions Regarding the Futility of Toil

Also I hated all that for which I had toiled under the sun, for I must leave it to my successor; and who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will control all that for which I have toiled and exercised my wisdom under the sun. This also is an illusion.

So I gave myself up to despair over all for which I had toiled under the sun, for a man who toils with wisdom and knowledge and success must leave his property to one who has not toiled for it. This also is an illusion and a great misfortune. For what does a man get for all his labor and his carefully laid plans for which he toils under the sun? For all his days are

full of pain and his task a vexation, with no rest for his mind even at night. This also is an illusion. There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and find pleasure in his toil. This also, I perceive, is the gift of God. For who can eat or who can have enjoyment apart from him? But this, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind.

352. Koheleth's Despair of Finding Justice in this World or Beyond

What profit has the worker in the fruit of his toil? I have seen the task which God has given men to do. He has made everything beautiful in its season, but he has also put ignorance in men's minds, so that they cannot discover from beginning to end the work that God is doing. I know, too, that whatever God does is eternal; nothing can be added to it nor taken from it; and God has done so that men may revere him.

Moreover I saw under the sun in the place of justice, crime; yes, in the place of righteousness there was wickedness! I said to myself, 'It is for the sake of mankind, that God may test them, and show them that they are beasts.' For the fate of mankind and of beasts is the same. The one dies like the other; and they all have the same spirit. Man has no advantage over the beast, for all is but an illusion. All go to the same place; all sprang from the dust, and will return to the dust. Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth? So I perceived that there is nothing better for man than to find pleasure in his activities, for that is his privilege; for who can help him to see what shall be after him?

Again I considered all the oppressions that are prac-

tised under the sun, and saw the tears of the oppressed. Therefore I deemed those who have long been dead more fortunate than those who are still alive; and better off than either is the one who has not yet been born, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

Again I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; the wise have no food, nor men of insight wealth, nor the learned popular favor; but all alike are the victims of time and chance.

353. The Limitations and Use of Wealth

He who loves money is never satisfied with money, nor he who loves a great fortune with gain. This also is an illusion. When wealth increases, they increase who share it; and what advantage is there to the owner except to see it with his eyes? The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the satiety of the rich does not let him sleep.

One of the grievous evils which I have seen under the sun is wealth hoarded by its owner to his ruin. When this wealth is lost through a bad venture, his own son has nothing in hand, and so, after becoming a father, he is left with nothing at all. As he came naked from his mother's womb, so he returns just as he came, and he receives for his toil nothing which he may carry away in his hand. This also is a grievous evil, that he must go away just as he came, and what advantage is it to him that he toils for the wind, and spends all his days in darkness and mourning and great vexation and sickness and distress?

This is what I have observed: It is good and proper for one to eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of all his

toil under the sun during the span of life which God has given him; for this is his right. Every man also to whom God has given riches and wealth and the power to enjoy them and to take up his task and to be happy in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he should remember that life is short and that God approves of his being happy.

354. Finding the Best that this Uncertain Life Offers

The worst evil of all that exists under the sun is that there is one fate for all, and that the minds of men are full of evil and boastful thoughts while they live, and after that they join the dead. Yet, there is hope for all who are still alive, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die, but the dead know absolutely nothing, nor do they have any further compensation, for their memory is forgotten. Their love, their hate, and their jealousy have already vanished, and never more will they have a share in anything that is done under the sun.

So go, eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved your actions. Let your garments be always white; and let not your head lack oil. Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of the vain life which God gives you under the sun, for that is your lot in life, the reward of your toil under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work, nor reckoning, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the abode of the dead to which you are going.

Cast your bread upon the waters,
And after many days you will find it.
Divide it up into seven or eight parts,

For you know not what disaster may befall the land.
If the clouds are full of rain,
They empty themselves on the earth.
If a tree falls to the south or the north,
In the place where it falls, it lies.

He who observes the wind does not sow,
And he who watches the clouds does not reap.
As you know not in what way the spirit
Enters the pregnant womb,
So you do not know how God works,—
He who creates the whole.

In the morning of life sow your seed,
And let not your hand rest until evening,
For you do not know which is the better,
Or whether both are equally good.

The light is sweet to the eyes,
And it is pleasant to see the sun.
Though a man live many years,
Let him be happy in all of them,
Yet let him remember the days of darkness,
For they shall indeed be many.
All that is coming is vanity.

355. The Enjoyment of Youth before Old Age Comes

Be happy, young man, in your youth,
And let your heart make you merry while young.
Follow your own inclinations,
And all that appeals to your eyes,
Put vexation out of your mind,
And banish all evil from your body;
For childhood and youth are illusions.

But remember your Creator in the days of your youth,
Before the evil days come on,

Or the years draw near when you shall say,
'I find no pleasure in them.'

Before the sun is darkened,
And the light of moon and stars,
And the clouds return after the rain;
When the keepers of the house tremble,
The strong men bow themselves,
Those who look out of the windows are dimmed,
And the doors to the street are closed;
When the sound of the grinding is low,
And one rises at the voice of a bird,
And the daughters of song are all feeble.
Then too one is afraid of a height,
And the way is full of terrors.
The almond tree puts forth its blossoms,
The grasshopper limps along,
And the fire of passion is dead.

Before the silver cord is snapped,
And the golden bowl is broken,
The pitcher broken at the fountain,
And the wheel broken at the cistern;
For the man goes to his eternal home,
And the mourners go about the streets;
The dust returns to earth as it was,
And the breath returns to God who gave it.
'Vanity of vanities,' says Koheleth,
'All is illusion.'

356. Later Wise Men's Comments on Koheleth's Philosophy of Life

A good name is better than good ointment;
And the day of death than the day of one's birth.
It is better to go to the house of mourning
Than to go to the house of feasting,
For that is the common end of man,
And the living will lay it to heart.

Grief is better than laughter,
For through sadness the heart may be made glad.
The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning;
But the mind of fools is in the house of mirth.
It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man,
Than for one to listen to the song of fools.
For as the crackling of nettles under kettles,
So is the laughter of a fool; it is vanity.

Better is the end of a thing than its beginning;
Better is patience than a haughty spirit.
Do not quickly give way to anger,
Only fools cherish wrath in their hearts.

The words of the wise spoken quietly
Are more effective than the loud cry of an arch-fool.
Wisdom is better than weapons,
But one sinner destroys much good.
A dead fly corrupts the perfumer's ointment,
So a little folly destroys precious wisdom.

Revere God and keep his commands,
For this is the whole duty of man;
For God will bring every deed to the judgment
That is passed on all secret acts, good or bad.

JOB

A LYRIC DRAMA PRESENTING VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

PROLOGUE

357. Suffering is a Test of Man's Piety

In the land of Uz there was a man named Job; and he was blameless and upright, one who revered God and avoided evil. He had seven sons and three daughters; and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred asses; and he had many servants, so that he was the richest man among all the peoples of the East. His sons used to gather and each in turn hold a feast in his own house; and they always invited their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When their round of feasting was over, it was Job's custom, in order to absolve them from all possible guilt, to offer burnt-offerings for each of them; for he said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and secretly cursed God.' And this Job never failed to do.

Now on a certain day when the sons of God presented themselves before Jehovah, the Adversary came with them. Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'From where do you come?' The Adversary answered, 'From going back and forth on the earth, and walking up and down on it.' And Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'Have you observed my servant Job? For there is no man like him on the earth, blameless and upright, who reveres God and avoids evil.' The Adversary replied, 'But is it for naught that Job fears God? *Have* you not yourself made a hedge all about him,

about his household, and about all that he has? You have blessed whatever he does, and his possessions have vastly increased. But just put out your hand now and touch all his possessions; he certainly will curse you to your face.' Then Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'See, everything that he possesses is in your power; only do not lay hands on Job himself.' So the Adversary left the presence of Jehovah.

Now on a certain day, as Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking in the oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were ploughing and the asses were grazing near them when Sabeans suddenly attacked and seized them; the servants were put to the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'The fire of God has fallen from heaven and has completely burned up the sheep and the servants, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

While this man was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'The Chaldeans, attacking in three bands, raided the camels and drove them away; the servants were put to the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

While this one was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking in their oldest brother's house when a great wind came from across the wilderness, struck the four corners of the house, and fell upon the young men and killed them. I alone have escaped to tell you.'

Then Job rose, tore his robe, shaved his head, prostrated himself on the ground and worshipped, saying:

Naked I came from my mother's womb,
And naked shall I return there!

Jehovah gave, Jehovah has taken away;
Blessed be the name of Jehovah!

In all this Job did not sin nor blame God.

On another day when the sons of God presented themselves before Jehovah, the Adversary came with them. And Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'From where do you come?'

The Adversary answered, 'From going back and forth on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.' Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'Have you observed my servant Job? For there is no man like him on the earth, blameless and upright, one who reverences God and avoids evil; he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me to ruin him without cause.' The Adversary answered Jehovah, 'Skin for skin, yes, a man will give all that he has for his life. But just put out your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he certainly will curse you to your face.' Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'See, he is in your power; only spare his life.'

So the Adversary left the presence of Jehovah, and afflicted Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head with leprosy so terrible that he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself.

As he sat among the ashes, his wife said to him, 'Are you still holding to your piety? Curse God and die.' But he said to her, 'You speak like a senseless woman. We accept prosperity from God, shall we not also accept misfortune?' In all this Job said nothing that was wrong.

When Job's three friends heard of all this misfortune that had befallen him, they came each from his own home: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, for they had arranged to go

together and show their sympathy for him and comfort him. But when they saw him in the distance, they did not at first recognize him. Then they all wept aloud and tore their robes and threw dust upon their heads. And they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights without any one saying a word to him, for they saw that his anguish was intense.

358. Job: Human Life is Intolerably Unjust

Then Job began to speak and said:

Let the day perish which gave me birth,
And the night when they said, 'A man child is born!'
Let that day be utter darkness,
Let God not regard it from above.
Let no ray of light shine upon it,
May gloom and darkness claim it.
Let a cloud settle down upon it,
Let all that make black the day frighten it!
That night! Let thick darkness seize it.
Join it not to the days of the year,
From the list of the months exclude it.

That night! let it ever be barren,
May no joyful shout invade it,
For it closed not the doors of my mother's womb,
Nor hid trouble from my eyes.

Why did I not die at birth,
Breathe my last when I came from the womb?
I should then have lain down in quiet,
Should have slept and been at rest
With kings and counsellors of earth,
Who built themselves great pyramids;
With princes rich in gold,
Who filled their houses with silver.

There the wicked cease from troubling,
There the weary are at rest;
Captives too at ease together,
Hearing not the voice of masters.
There the small and great are gathered,
There the slave is free at last.

Why is light given the wretched,
And life to the bitter in soul,
To a man whose way is hid,
To him whom God has hedged in?
For sighs take the place of my food,
And my groans are poured out like water.
For the evil I fear overtakes me,
And whatever I dread comes upon me.

359. Eliphaz: No Man can be Absolutely Perfect; Therefore All Suffer

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

If one ventures a word, will it vex you?
But who can restrain from speaking?
See! you have instructed many,
And strengthened the drooping hands.
Your words have upheld the fallen,
Giving strength to tottering knees.
But now that it comes to you, you are impatient,
Now that it touches you, you are dismayed.

Is not your religion your confidence,
Your blameless life your hope?
Remember! What innocent man ever perished?
Or where were the upright ever destroyed?

Now a message was secretly brought me,
And a whisper of it reached my ear,
In thoughts from the visions of night,
When deep sleep falls upon men;
Fear came upon me, and trembling,
That made my bones all quake.
Then a spirit passed before me,
The hair of my flesh stood on end,
But I could not discern its appearance;
A form was before my eyes;
In the silence I heard a voice:

'Can mortal man be just before God?
Can one be pure before his Maker?
Even his servants he does not trust,
And his angels he charges with error;
How much more those who dwell in clay houses,
Whose very foundation is dust,
Who, like the moth, are crushed,
Between morning and evening destroyed,
Unobserved, they perish for ever.'

360. Suffering is for Man's Discipline

Happy the man whom God corrects;
Therefore spurn not the Almighty's chastening.
For he causes pain but to comfort,
And wounds that his hands may heal.
From countless troubles he will deliver you;
Whatever comes, no evil shall touch you;
In famine he will redeem you from death,
In time of war from the might of the sword.
You shall be hid from the scourge of the tongue;
You shall not fear when destruction comes.
At ruin and want you shall laugh,
You shall have no fear of wild beasts,
You shall be in league with the stones,
And at peace with the beasts of the field.
You shall know that your tent is secure,
You shall visit your fold, and miss nothing.

You shall know your descendants are many,
And your offspring as grass of the earth.
You shall die in a ripe old age,
As a sheaf garnered in its season.

361. Job: Suffering is Often Undeserved

Then Job answered:

Oh, that my grief were carefully weighed;
All my calamities laid in the scales!

For they would outweigh the sand of the sea;
Therefore it is that my words have been rash.
For the arrows of God the Almighty have pierced me,
My spirit drinks their deadly poison,
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.
Does the wild ass bray as he munches the grass,
And over their fodder do oxen low?
Can a man eat what is tasteless and saltless?
Is there any taste in the white of an egg?

Oh, that my request might be granted,
And that God would give me my heart's desire,
Even that he would consent to crush me,
Would let loose his hand and cut me off!
Then this would be my consolation,
I would exult amid pain unsparing,
For I denied not the words of the Holy One.

What strength have I, that I should endure?
And what is my future, that I should be patient?
Is my strength the strength of stones,
Or is my body made of brass?
See, I have no help in myself,
And the power to succeed is driven from me?

A friend should be kind to one fainting,
Though he lose his faith in the Almighty.
My brothers have been as a treacherous brook,
As streams that overflow their banks,
Which are turbid because of the melting ice,
And the snow that hides itself within them.
But when it is warm, they vanish,
When hot, their channels are dry.
Caravans turn their course to them,
They go up through the waste, and perish.
Even so you have been to me:
You see the terror and fear.

Have I said, 'Bring me a present?'
Or, 'Give me a gift from your wealth?'
'Save me from the hand of a foe?'
'From the power of the tyrant redeem me?'

Teach me, and I will keep silent.
Show me how I have erred.
How forcible are upright words!
What does your reproof reprove?
Do you mean to rebuke mere words?
The words of the desperate are as wind.
You would fall on a blameless man,
And make an assault on your friend.

Now be pleased to look upon me;
I would surely not lie to your face.
Turn back, let there be no injustice;
Turn back, for right is still with me.
Is injustice on my tongue?
Can I not discern what is evil?

362. Life is Full of Seeming Injustice

Has nôt man a hard service on earth
Whose days are like those of a hireling?
As a slave who pants for the shadows,
As a hireling who looks for his wage,
So fruitless months are my lot,
And wearisome nights are appointed me.
Whenever I lie down, I say:
'When will day come, that I may arise?'
I am full of unrest till the dawn.

Worms and clods of dust clothe my flesh;
My skin grows hard, then breaks.
My days are swifter than weavers' thread,
And are spent without any hope.
As the cloud is consumed and is gone,

So he shall never come back
Who goes down to the home of the dead.
He shall never return to his house,
His place shall know him no more.

So I will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in anguish of spirit,
I will complain in bitterness of soul.
Am I a sea, or a sea-monster,
That thou settest a watch over me?
When I say, 'My bed shall give comfort,
My couch shall ease my complaint';
Then thou frightest me with dreams,
And terrifiest me through visions,
So that I myself choose strangling,
And death rather than my pains.

I loathe life, I would not go on living,
Let me be, for my days are but breath;
What is man, that thou dost exalt him,
That thou thinkest of him at all,
Remembering him each morning,
And testing him every moment?
If I sin, then how does that harm thee,
O Watcher of men?

Why hast thou made me thy target?
Why am I a burden to thee?
Why dost thou not pardon my guilt,
And overlook mine iniquity?
For now I shall lie in the dust;
When thou seekest me, I shall not be!

363. Bildad: Each Man Gets His Just Deserts

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:

How long will you speak such things,
And your words be mere blustering wind?

Is God a perverter of justice?
Or can the Almighty do wrong?
If your children sinned against him,
He has let them suffer the penalty;
But you should earnestly seek him,
And supplicate the Almighty.
If you are pure and upright,
He will now answer your prayer,
And will prosper your righteous abode.

For inquire now of past generations,
And note what the fathers have searched out;
For we are of yesterday, and know nothing,
Our days upon earth are like a shadow.
Will they not also teach you and tell you,
And speak words that come from their heart?

Can papyrus grow up without mire?
Can the reed-grass thrive without water?
While still green and uncut,
Of all herbs, it withers most quickly.
So end all who forget their God,
So the hope of the godless man perishes.
Surely God will not cast out a perfect man,
Nor will he uphold evil-doers.
He will yet fill your mouth with laughter,
And your lips with shouts of joy.
Your foes shall be clothed with shame,
And the tent of the wicked shall vanish.

364. Job: The Innocent Sufferer Cannot Vindicate Himself before God

Then Job answered:

To be sure, I know that it is so;
But how can a man be just before God?
If he should desire to contend with him,
Not one charge in a thousand could he answer.

He is wise in mind and mighty in strength,
Who has ever defied him and prospered,
Him who without effort moves mountains,
Overturning them in his anger;
Who shakes the earth out of its place,
So that its pillars tremble;
Who commands the sun and it rises not,
And places a seal on the stars?
When he seizes me, who can prevent him?
Who will ask, 'What doest thou?'

Though I were right, I could give him no answer,
But would have to beg mercy from my judge.
If I called to him, he would make no reply,
I do not believe he would hear my voice.
He who crushes me by a fierce tempest,
And increases my wounds unjustly,
Does not permit me to catch my breath,
But fills me full of bitterness.

Is it question of strength? He is mighty!
Or of justice, who will arraign me?
Though right, my own mouth would condemn me;
Though blameless, I would be proved guilty.

Blameless I am! I regard not myself;
I loathe my life; it is all one to me.
Therefore I openly declare:
He destroys the blameless as well as the wicked,
And when the scourge brings sudden death,
At the despair of the innocent he mocks.
He has given over the earth to the wicked;
He veils the faces of its judges;
If it be not he, who then is it?

My days are more swift than a runner,
They flee away, bringing no joy,
They glide by like ships of papyrus,
Like vultures that swoop on their prey.

If I resolve to forget my complaint,
To cast off my sadness and smile,
I shudder at all my pains,
And know that thou wilt not acquit me,
But that I shall surely be guilty.
So why should I labor in vain?
Though I should wash myself with snow,
And cleanse my hands with lye,
Thou wouldst plunge me in the mire,
And my own clothes would abhor me.

Thou art not a man as I am,
That we may come together in judgment;
There is no one between us as arbiter,
To lay his hand on us both.
Let him take his rod from off me,
And let not his terrors seize me;
Then would I speak and not fear,
For I am at heart not afraid.

365. God Appears at Times to be a Cruel Tyrant

In my soul I loathe my life,
I will let my complaint loose against him;
In the bitterness of my soul I will speak,
I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;
Show me why thou contendest against me.
Is it well for thee to oppress,
To despise the work of thy hands,
And favor the plan of the wicked?

Hast thou eyes of flesh?
Or seest thou as a man?
Are thy days as the days of a man,
Or thy years as the life of a mortal,
That thou strivest to find out my guilt,
And searchest after my sin,
Though thou knowest that I am not guilty,

And that from thy hand none can deliver?
Thy hands have formed and fashioned me,
And now wilt thou turn and destroy me?
Remember thou madest me as clay;
Wilt thou turn me again into dust?
Hast thou not poured me out as milk,
And curdled me like cheese?

Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
And knit me with bones and with sinews.
Thou hast granted me life and favor,
And thy care has guarded my spirit.
Yet these thou didst hide in thy heart,
But I know that this was thy plan.

If I sin, then thou dost observe me,
And refuse to acquit me of guilt.
Am I wicked? Then woe unto me.
Am I just? I cannot lift my head,
Full of shame and drunk with sorrow!
If I rise, as a lion thou huntest me,
Appalling me with fresh marvels!

Are not my days few enough?
O leave me to smile a little
Ere I go no more to return,
To the land of the shadow of death,
To the land as dark as midnight,
Where the very light is darkness!

366. Zophar: Repentance will Avert Calamity and Bring Prosperity

Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

Should a torrent of words go unanswered?
And should a mere boaster be justified?
Must men hold their tongues while you babble,
And mock, with no one to curb you?

For you say, 'My life is pure,
And I am clean in thine eyes.'
But oh, that God would speak,
And open his lips against you,
And show you the secrets of wisdom,
How wonderfully effective they are!
Then you would know he exacts from you
Less than your guilt deserves.

Can you probe the real nature of God,
Discover the Almighty's perfection?
It is higher than heaven; what can you do?
Deeper than Hades; what can you know?
Its measure longer than earth,
And wider than the sea.

If you would cleanse your heart,
And stretch out your hands to God,
And put away sin from your hand,
And let no wrong dwell in your tent,
You would then lift your face without blemish,
And you would be steadfast and fearless.

Then you would forget your misery,
And recall it as floods that have passed.
And your life would be brighter than noonday,
Your darkness would be like the morning.
You would feel secure, for there is hope;
You would look about you and rest in safety.
You would lie down, with none to frighten you,
And many would seek to win your favor.

367. Job: Special Pleading for God is Futi

Then Job answered:

Verily you are the people,
And with you wisdom shall die!

But I have a mind as well as you,
And who does not know all this?

With God is wisdom and might;
Counsel and insight are his.
What he ruins can not be rebuilt;
What he imprisons can not be set free;
When he holds back the floods, they dry up;
When he sends them on earth, they destroy it.
With him is strength and wisdom;
Deceived and deceiver are his.

He deprives the trusty of speech,
Takes away the judgment of elders.
He pours contempt upon princes,
And looses the belt of the strong.

He makes nations great, then destroys them,
Expands them, then hems them in.
Earth's chiefs he deprives of their judgment,
Makes them wander in trackless wastes,
Where they grope in utter darkness,
And stagger like drunken men.

My eye has seen all this,
My ear has heard and noted it.
What you know, I know also;
I am not at all inferior to you.
But I would address the Almighty,
And I long to reason with God;
For you are but forgers of lies,
Each of you worthless physicians!
Oh, that you were but silent!
That would be wisdom on your part.

Now listen to my argument,
And heed the plea of my lips.
Is it for God you speak falsely,

For him that you talk deceitfully?
Will you show him partiality,
Or be special pleaders for God?
Were it well if he searched you out?
Can you trick God, as you trick men?
For he will surely rebuke you,
If you secretly show partiality.
Shall his majesty not overawe you,
And dread of him fall upon you?
Your maxims are proverbs of ashes,
Your defences but works of clay.

Be still that I may speak;
Let come to me what may,
I will take my flesh in my teeth,
And place my life in my hand.
He will slay me; I have no hope,
But I will defend my acts to his face.
This also shall be my salvation,
That no godless man would approach him.
Give careful heed to my words,
As I set them forth in your hearing.
Now I have prepared my case,
I know that I am right.
Who will contend with me?
Then I would be silent and die.

Only do two things for me;
Then from thee I will not hide:
Withdraw thy hand far from me,
And let not thy terror appall me.
Then call, and I will answer,
Or let me speak, and answer me.
How many are my iniquities?
Let me know my guilt and my sin.

Oh, why dost thou hide thy face,
And count me as thine enemy?

Wilt thou harry a wind-blown leaf,
Wilt thou chase the withered stubble,
That thou judgest me so harshly,
And repayest the sins of my youth?

368. If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?

Man that is born of woman
Is short-lived and full of trouble.
He springs up like a flower, then withers;
He flees like a shadow and stays not.
Dost thou notice such a one,
And bring him to judgment before thee?
Look away and let him have peace,
To enjoy like a hireling his day.

For there is hope for a tree,
Though cut down, it may sprout again,
And may not cease sending up shoots.
Though its root grow old in the earth,
And its stock be dead in the ground,
It may bud at the scent of water,
And send up sprouts like a plant.
But a strong man dies and lies prostrate;
Man breathes his last, and where is he?
Like waters gone from the sea,
Like a river dry and parched,
He lies down to rise no more,
Nor awakes till the heavens vanish,
Nor is ever aroused from his sleep.

Oh that in the abode of the dead thou wouldst hide me away,
Conceal me until thine anger be past,
In thine own set time remember me!
If a man may die, and live again,
I would wait all my days of hard service,
Until my release should come.

Thou wouldst call and I would answer,
Thou wouldst yearn for the work of thy hands!

But now thou countest my steps,
And dost not forgive my sin;
My transgression is sealed in a bag,
Thou hast kept on record my guilt.

But the mountain crumbles to pieces,
And the rock is moved from its place;
The water wears down the stones,
The floods wash away the soil;
So thou destroyest man's hope,
And he goes, vanquished by thee, forever;
With altered mien, thou dost send him away.

His sons attain honor, unknown to him,
Or shame, but he does not perceive it.
Only his body is wracked,
And the soul within him mourns.

THE SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES

369. Eliphaz: It is Impiety to Question the Justice of God's Rule

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

Should a wise man reply with mere bluster,
And be full of intemperate speech?
Should he reason with profitless babble,
Or with speeches of no avail?
See, you are destroying religion,
Impairing devout meditation.
For your wickedness prompts your speech,
And you choose the tongue of the crafty.
Your own mouth condemns you, not I,
And your own lips are witness against you.

Were you the first man to be born,
Brought forth before the hills?
Do you hear God's secret council,
And is wisdom revealed to you only?
What know you, that we know not?
What insight have you that we lack?
With us are the gray and the aged,
Men older by far than your father.
Do you spurn the divine consolations,
The words spoken gently to you?
Why do your feelings control you,
And why do your eyes roll in frenzy,
That you set your will against God,
And let such words escape you?

What is man, that he should be clean,
Or one born of woman, innocent?
If God trusts not even his holy ones,

And the heavens are unclean in his sight,
How much more abhorrent and filthy
A man who drinks evil like water!
In his ears is the sound of terrors,
In prosperity comes the spoiler,
For his hand he has raised against God,
And has even defied the Almighty.

370. Job: Even though Unjustly Afflicted, Man Has a Friend in Heaven

Then Job answered:

Many such things have I heard;
You all are wearisome comforters.
Is there no end to vain words?
What provokes you that you answer?
I too could speak like you;
If you were but in my place,
I could join words together against you,
And at you could shake my head.

God has given me up to knaves,
Cast me into the hands of the wicked.
I was at ease, but he shattered me,
By the neck he seized and crushed me;
He has set me up as his target,
From all sides his arrows assail me.

I sewed sackcloth upon my skin,
And have humbled myself in the dust.
My face is red with weeping,
Deep darkness is over my eyelids;
Although I have done no violence,
And though my prayer is pure.

O earth, cover not my blood,
Let my cry find no place to rest.

Even now is my Witness in heaven,
He who vouches for me is on high.
My friends pour their scorn upon me,
But my eye pours out tears to God,
That he plead for a man with God
As a mortal pleads with his neighbor!

371. Bildad: Disaster Always Overtakes the Wicked

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:

When will you end mere words?
Consider, and then we will speak.
Why are we counted as beasts,
And deemed unclean by you?
You who tear yourself in your anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for you,
Or the rock be removed from its place?

The light of the wicked is quenched,
And the flame of his fire shines not.
The light is dark in his tent,
And the lamp above him goes out,
His confident strides are shortened,
And his own counsel proves his ruin,
For his foot is thrust into a net,
And he walks straight into the toils.
A trap shall catch his heel,
And a snare shall tightly grip him.
Disaster shall hunger for him,
And misfortune await his stumbling.
His memory shall fade from the land,
No fame shall he have abroad.
Driven from light into darkness,
From the world shall he be banished.

372. Job: He Who Afflicts will Vindicate His Servant after Death

Then Job answered:

How long will you force me to suffer,
And break me in pieces with words?
These many times you reproach me,
Yet are not ashamed to attack me.
If it even were true that I erred,
My error is mine alone.

If indeed you would rise up against me,
And charge me with shameful crimes,
Then know that God has betrayed me,
And has spread his net about me.
I cry, 'Wrong!' but I am not heard;
I call, but there is no justice.
He has blocked my way completely,
Has shrouded my path in darkness;
He has stripped me of my glory,
And taken the crown from my head.

My brothers keep far from me,
My friends are wholly estranged.
My neighbors have ceased to know me,
The guests in my house have forgotten me.
My own maids count me a stranger,
In their sight I am but an alien.
To my servant I call, with no answer;
With my mouth I must entreat him.

All my intimate friends abhor me,
And they whom I love turn against me.
My skin clings to my bones,
I escape by the skin of my teeth.

Have pity, have pity, my friends,
For the hand of God has touched me.

Why, like God, do you persecute me,
Not content with destroying my body?

Oh, that my words were now written,
That they were inscribed in a book,
That with an iron pen and with lead
In rock they were graven forever!

For I know that my Defender lives,
That at last he shall stand upon earth;
And after this skin is destroyed,
Freed from my flesh, I shall see him,
Whom I shall behold for myself;
My own eyes shall see, and no stranger's.

373. Zophar: The Triumph of the Wicked is Brief

Then Zophar the Naamathite answered:

Not so do my thoughts make answer;
For this reason I hasten to speak.
Must I hear your insulting reproof?
With senseless bluster you answer me.

Know you not this from of old,
Since man was placed on the earth:
That the joy of the wicked is short,
The mirth of the godless but momentary?
The eye which beheld him shall see him no more,
And never again shall his place behold him.
The heavens shall bring to light his guilt,
And the earth shall rise in protest against him.
Such is the wicked man's portion from God,
The divine retribution for all his iniquity.

374. Job: The Grim Facts of Life Belie the Traditional Explanation of Suffering

Then Job answered:

Listen attentively to my speech,
And let this be your consolation:
Bear with me now while I speak,
And when I have spoken, mock on.

Is it of man I complain?
And why should I not be impatient?
Why do the wicked live on,
Grow old, and attain great power?
Their children are settled about them,
And their offspring before their eyes.
Their households are safe from fear,
No rod of God falls upon them.

They send out their young like a flock,
And their children dance for joy;
They sing to the timbrel and harp,
And rejoice at the sound of the pipe.

Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us;
We have no desire to know thy ways.
Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
What advantage have we, if we pray to him?'
Behold! Their fortune is in their own hands.
Little does God heed the counsel of sinners.
How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out?
How oft does calamity fall upon them?

One dies with his strength unimpaired,
Wholly at ease and prosperous;
His pails are full of milk,
In his bones the marrow is moist.
But another dies embittered,

With never a taste of prosperity.
In the dust they lie down together,
And the worm covers them both.

Have you not asked those who travel?
And do you not know their proofs,
That the wicked is kept from disaster,
Is saved in the day of wrath?
Who declares his acts to his face,
Or repays him for what he has done?

And yet he is borne to the grave,
And watch is kept over his tomb.
Sweet to him are the clods of the valley;
After him all men follow,
As innumerable have before!
Why do you give me vain comfort,
And make answers bereft of all truth?

THE THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES

375. Eliphaz: Suffering is Clear Evidence of Crime

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

Can a man be of service to God?
For a wise man serves only himself.
Is the Almighty pleased by your righteousness?
Does your blameless life bring him profit?
For your piety would he reprove you,
Or prefer a charge against you?

Is not your wickedness great?
Is there no end to your crimes?
For you take pledges wrongly from kinsmen,
And strip from the naked their clothing.
You have given no drink to the weary,
And withheld your food from the hungry.
The land is for him who is strong;
The man specially favored possesses it.
Widows you have sent away empty,
And broken the arms of the fatherless.
Therefore snares encircle you,
And sudden fear confounds you;
Your light has gone out in darkness,
And the flood of waters engulfs you.

Yet you say, 'What does God know about it,
Can he judge aright through the darkness?
Clouds envelop him, he sees not,
And he walks on the vault of heaven.'
Will you keep to the way of old,
Which wicked men have trodden?

If you turn humbly to the Almighty,
And banish sin far from your tent,
You shall then find delight in the Lord,
And shall lift up your face to God.
What you decree shall stand,
And light shall shine on your ways;
For he humbles him who speaks proudly,
But saves the man who is modest.

376. Job: If Man could Find God, His Problems would be Solved

Then Job answered:

Even now my complaint must be bitter;
My affliction exceeds my groaning.
Oh, that I knew where to find him,
That I might go straight to his throne!
I would lay my cause before him,
Filling my mouth with arguments.
I would know the reply he would make,
And understand what he would say.
Would he use his great power against me?
No, he at least would give heed.
There the upright might reason with him;
And my case should be settled forever.

I go forward, but he is not there,
And backward, but cannot perceive him;
On the left I seek, but in vain,
On the right, but I do not see him.
For he knows the way that I take;
I should come forth as gold, should he test me.
My feet have held to his steps,
His way have I kept without swerving,
And obeyed his every command.
I have treasured his words in my heart,
But when he decides who can turn him?
And what he desires, he does.

Therefore his presence confounds me,
When I think of him, I am afraid.
For God has made my heart faint,
The Almighty has filled me with terror;
For indeed I am cut off by darkness,
And gloom envelops my face.
Why does the Almighty not fix times for judgment,
And they who best know him not see his great day?
The wicked remove the landmarks,
They steal the flock with its shepherd,
They drive off the ass of the fatherless,
Take the ox of the widow in pledge.

377. Bildad: It is Impossible for Man to be Perfect in God's Sight

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:

Dominion and fear are with God;
He makes peace in the heights of heaven.
Has he not innumerable armies?
And on whom does his light not arise?
How can man then be just before God?
And one born of a woman be pure?
See, even the moon has no brightness,
And the stars are not pure in his sight;
How much less is man, a mere worm,
And the son of man but a maggot!

378. Job: Guilt does not Explain All Suffering

Then Job answered:

How well you have helped the weak,
Relieved the arm of the powerless,
Counselled the man with no wisdom,
Poured forth in abundance sound knowledge!

By whose help have you uttered these words,
And whose spirit inspired your speech?

As God lives, who has robbed me of justice,
The Almighty, who makes me bitter
(For my life is still intact,
And the spirit of God fills my nostrils),
I swear that my lips speak no falsehood,
My tongue does not utter deceit.
Far be it from me to admit you are right;
Till I die, I will never disclaim innocence.

379. Another Wise Man: The Divine Wisdom that Rules the Universe is Incomprehensible

There is a mine for silver,
And a place where gold is refined.
Iron is taken from ore,
And copper is melted from rock.
Man puts an end to darkness,
And explores to the furthest bound
The stones that are buried in darkness.
He breaks a shaft through the dust;
With no foothold, forgotten, they hang,
Afar from men they swing.
From the face of the earth comes bread,
But beneath it is melted by fire.
Its stones abound in sapphires,
And its dust yields grains of gold.

Man lays his hand on the rock,
By their roots he overturns mountains.
He cuts channels through the rocks,
And his eye sees each precious thing.
He keeps the streams from trickling,
And brings to light what is hid.

But where can wisdom be found?
And where is the home of understanding?
The way to it no man knows,
It is not found in the land of the living.
The deep says, 'It is not in me';
The sea says, 'It is not with me.'

It can not be purchased with gold,
Nor will silver be taken in payment,
Not in Ophir gold can one value it,
Nor in precious onyx or sapphire.
Crystal and coral are no match for it;
More precious than rubies is Wisdom.

But Wisdom—from whence does it come?
Understanding—where is its home?
It is hid from the eyes of all living,
Concealed from the birds of the air.
Destruction and Death declare:
'We have heard but a rumor about it.'
God perceives the way to it,
And he alone knows its home;
For he looks to the ends of the earth,
Seeing everything under the heavens,
He who fixed the force of the wind,
And by measure allotted the waters.

When he made a law for the rain,
And a path for the thunder-bolts,
Then he saw Wisdom and measured it,
He perfected and tested it.
And to man he said, 'Behold!
To revere the Lord is wisdom,
To avoid evil, understanding.'

380. Job: To Lose the Consciousness of Fellowship with God is the Supreme Misfortune

Job again took up his discourse and said:

Oh, to be as in months of old,
As in days when God guarded my steps,
When his lamp shone above my head,
And I walked by his light through the darkness;
As I was in my prosperous days,
When God protected my tent;
When still the Almighty was with me,
And my children were all about me;
When peace and plenty attended me,
And the rock poured me streams of oil!

When I went to the gate of the city,
And took my seat in the open,
The youths, when they saw me, retired,
And the aged rose up and stood;
The princes refrained from talking,
And laid their hands on their mouths;
The voices of nobles were hushed,
And their tongues stuck fast to their palates.

He who heard of me called me happy,
He who saw me bore me witness,
For I saved the poor who cried,
And the orphan with none to help him.
The perishing gave me their blessing,
And I made the widow's heart sing.

I put on the garment of righteousness,
And justice as robe and turban.

Eyes I was to the blind,
Feet I was to the lame,
And a father to those who were needy.
I espoused the cause of the stranger,
I shattered the jaws of the wicked,
And wrested the prey from his teeth.

Men listened to me expectantly,
And in silence awaited my counsel.
After my words they spoke not,
And my speech fell as rain-drops upon them.
But they sing of me now in derision,
And my name is a by-word among them.

I cry to thee, but thou makest no answer,
I stand up before thee, but thou dost not heed.
Thou hast become a merciless tyrant;
With the might of thy hand thou scourgest me.
Thou liftest me up to ride on the wind,
And dissolvest me in the roaring storm.

Yet a falling man stretches forth his hand,
And in his calamity cries for help.
Did I not weep for the one in trouble?
Did not my heart deeply grieve for the needy?
I looked for good, but evil came,
I hoped for light, but darkness descended.

381. Suffering cannot Crush Him Who Faithfully Serves God and Man

If I have ever indulged in falsehood,
Or I have been eager to practise deceit,
Then let God weigh me on scales that are just,
And he will acknowledge that I am innocent.

If ever my step has swerved from the way,
Or my heart has followed my own inclination,

Or if any spot besmirches my hands,
Then let me sow and another eat,
And let all my produce be rooted up.

If I have ever been lured by a woman,
Or lain in wait at my neighbor's door,
Then let my wife grind as a slave for another,
And let other men bow down upon her;
For adultery is a heinous crime,
A crime indeed that calls for judgment,
A fire that eats to the depths of hell,
And it would completely consume all my increase.

If I had spurned the cause of my servant,
And that of my maid, when they argued against me;
What would I do when God takes vengeance?
And when he accuses me, what would I answer?
Did not he who made me create him also,
And the same one fashion us each in the womb?
From the days of my youth like a father he reared me,
And he was my guide from the time I was born.

If I have denied the poor their desire,
Or disappointed the hopes of the widow,
Or if I have eaten my morsel alone,
So that the fatherless has not shared it;
If I have seen any naked and perishing,
Or anyone needy with nothing to cover him,
If the loins of such have not blessed my gifts,
And his body been warmed by a fleece from my sheep;
If against the just I have raised my hands,
Because I saw an ally in the court,
Let my shoulder then fall from its blade,
And my arm be wrenched from the socket.
For the fear of God restrains me,
And his majesty renders me helpless.

If I have put my faith in gold,
And have said to fine gold, 'In you I trust!'

If I have rejoiced that my wealth is great,
And because my hand has gained much—

If I have rejoiced at my enemy's ruin,
Or exulted when evil befell him,
If I have permitted my mouth to sin
By demanding his life with a curse—

If the men of my household have not said,
'Who is not satisfied with his food?'
If ever a stranger has lodged in the street,
Or I have not opened my doors to the traveller—

If like Adam I hid my wrong-doing,
By concealing my guilt in my bosom,
Because of my fear of the multitude,
And my dread of public contempt,
And kept silent behind closed doors—

If my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
If I have eaten its fruits without paying,
And caused its owners to lose their lives,
Let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And stinking weeds instead of barley.

Oh, for someone to hear me!
Behold my defence all signed!
Let now the Almighty answer,
My Adversary write the indictment!
On my shoulder I would bear it,
As a crown I would bind it round me;
I would tell him my every act;
Like a prince I would enter his presence!

382. Suffering is One of the Ways by Which God Speaks to Man

Then the wrath of Elihu the Buzite was aroused against Job, because he had maintained that he was more just than God, and because he saw that Job's three friends had found no answer. So Elihu spoke up and said:

I am but young in years,
While you are very old,
And so I held back, and feared
To tell you my opinion.
I felt that days should speak,
That the mature should teach wisdom.

But there is a spirit in men,
The Almighty's breath gives them insight.
The aged are not always wise,
Nor do elders best discern truth.
Therefore I urge you to hear me,
While I, too, state my opinion.

I waited while you spoke,
And listened to your reasoning;
While you carefully chose your words,
I gave to you close heed.
But none brought conviction to Job,
Not one of you refuted his claims.

Amazed, they answer no more,
They have not a word to say.
Must I wait because they are silent
And stand thus, with no further answer?

I must speak and so find relief,
I must open my lips and answer.

So now, Job, hear my speech,
And listen to all that I say.
Then answer me, if you can,
Stand forth, and debate with me.
In the sight of God I am like you,
I, too, was formed out of clay.
The spirit of God has made me,
The Almighty's breath gives me life.
No dread of me need appal you,
And my hand shall not rest on you heavily.

Why do you strive against God
Because he gives you no answer?
For God has one way of speaking,
Yes, two, but he does not repeat it;
In a dream, in a vision of night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,
As they slumber upon their beds,
Then he opens the ears of men,
And instructs them by terrible warnings,
To turn men aside from wrong-doing,
And to save their bodies from ruin;
To keep them back from the grave,
And their lives from descending to hell.

On a bed of pain he is chastened,
And all his bones grow stiff,
He utterly loathes all bread,
And abhors the daintiest food.
His flesh is wasted and lean,
And all his bones stick out.
His soul draws near to the grave,
And his life to the angels of death.

If there be with him an angel,
An interpreter, one of a thousand,

To make known to the man what is right,
Then God will be gracious and say:
'Deliver him from the grave;
I have found for his life a ransom.'
His flesh shall be fresh as a child's,
And the days of his youth shall return.

The sufferer God saves through his suffering,
And opens his ear by adversity.
He would have led you out of distress,
To a broad place, where there is no constraint,
And where your table would be full of fatness.
But instead the full fate of the wicked is yours,
Judgment and justice hold you captive.
Will your cry deliver you from distress,
Or all the resources of your might?

Hark to the roar of his voice,
And the sound that goes forth from his mouth.
He sends it throughout the heavens,
To the ends of the earth his lightning.
In the wake of it roars his voice,
With a voice majestic he thunders,
And he does not restrain his lightnings,
Whenever his voice is heard.

THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

386. The Lord: Finite Man cannot Grasp and therefore Justly Criticise the Infinite Plan of the Universe

Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind:

Who is this that obscures my plan
By words devoid of knowledge?
Now gird your loins like a warrior;
Let me ask, and you answer me!

Where were you when I founded the earth?
You have knowledge and insight, so tell me.
You must know! Who determined its measures?
Or who measured it off with a line?
On what were its pedestals placed?
Or who laid its corner-stone,
When the morning stars all sang together,
And the sons of God shouted for joy?

Who shut up the sea with doors,
When it broke forth fresh from the womb;
When I made the clouds its garments,
And thick mists its swaddling-band,
When I appointed its boundaries,
And set up its barriers and doors,
Saying, 'Thus far, but no further;
Here shall your proud waves cease'?

Have you ever commanded the morning,
Or shown the dawn its place,
To take hold of the skirts of the earth,
That the wicked might be shaken out of it?

It is changed as clay under the seal,
And the world stands forth as a garment;
The wicked are shorn of their light,
And the upraised arm is broken.

Have you entered the springs of the sea,
Or walked in the depths of the ocean?
Have the gates of death been unveiled to you?
Have you seen the guardians of Hades?
Have you grasped the breadth of the earth?
If you know all this, declare it.

Where is the dwelling of light,
And where the abode of darkness?
Can you take it to its border,
And lead it back to its home?
You know, for you were born then,
And your years are so great in number!

Have you entered the storehouse of snow,
Have you looked on the guardian of hail,
Which I hoard for the time of distress,
For the day of assault and battle?

In what way are the clouds divided
That scatter the showers on earth?
Who has cleft for the torrents a channel,
Or a path for the flash of the lightning,
Sending rain on a desolate land,
On the uninhabited wilderness,
To slake waste and desolation,
To clothe the dry land with verdure?

Has the rain a father?
Who gave birth to the dew-drops?
Out of whose womb came the ice?
And who gave birth to the hoar-frost,
So the waters are frozen like stone,
And the face of the deep is hidden?

Can you bind the group of the Pleiades,
Or loose the bands of Orion?
Can you lead forth the stars in their season,
Or guide the Bear with her young?
Do you know the laws of the heavens?
Can you set up their rule on the earth?

Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
That abundance of water may answer you?
Can you send on their missions the lightnings;
To you do they say, 'Here we are'?
Who has put in the dark clouds their wisdom,
Or given the cloud-rack perception?

Can you hunt the prey for the lioness,
Or fill the mouths of her cubs,
When they couch in their dens together,
Or lie in wait in the thicket?
Who provides at evening her prey,
When her young ones cry to God,
And wander in search of food?

Do you give the war horse his might,
Clothe his neck with the quivering mane?
Do you make him leap like a locust?
His majestic snorting strikes terror,
He paws in the valley, rejoicing;
In strength he goes forth to the fray,
He mocks at fear, undismayed,
He turns not back from the sword.

The quiver rattles upon him,
The spear and the javelin flash.
He devours the ground with fierce rage,
Halting not at the blast of the trumpet.
When the bugle sounds, he neighs,
As he scents the fray from afar,
The din of commands and the battle cry.

Does the hawk soar because of your wisdom,
And stretch her wings to the south wind?
Does the eagle mount up at your bidding,
And build her nest on high?
On the cliff she dwells, making her home,
On the peak of the cliff and the stronghold.
From there she spies out her prey;
From afar her eyes behold it.

Will the fault-finder strive with Almighty?
He who argues with God, let him answer.
Will you set aside my judgment,
And condemn me, that you may be justified?

Or have you an arm like God,
With a voice like his can you thunder?
Deck yourself with pride and dignity,
Clothe yourself with glory and splendor,
Pour forth the floods of your anger,
And abase all those who are proud.
Tread down in their tracks the wicked,
Bury them all in the dust,
Shut them up in the hidden place;
Then will I sing your praise,
Because your right hand can save you!

384. Job: A Larger Vision of God Begets Humility and Trust

Then Job answered the Lord:

How small I am! what can I answer?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
I spoke once, but will do so no more;
Yes, twice, but will go no further.

I know thou canst do all things,
And that nothing with thee is impossible.

I spoke, therefore, without sense,
Of wonders beyond my knowledge.
I had heard of thee but by hearsay,
But now my eye has seen thee;
Therefore I loathe my words,
And repent in dust and ashes.

INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

GENESIS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1^{1}–2^{3}	1	1
2^{4a-8a}	2	4
2^{9}	2	5
2^{15-24}	2	5
2^{25}–3^{19}	3	5
2^{21}	3	7
2^{23}	3	7
3^{20}	4	7
4^{1-16a}	4	7
6^{5-7a}	5	9
6^{7c}	5	9
6^{8}	5	9
6^{13-17}	5	9
7^{1-5}	5	9
7^{6b-8}	5	10
7^{12}	5	10
7^{16b}	5	10
7^{18}	5	10
$7^{22, 23}$	5	10
8^{1-3a}	5	10
8^{6-12}	5	10
8^{13b}	5	11
8^{18}	5	11
8^{20}	5	11
8^{21b-22}	5	11
9^{1-15}	6	11
9^{18a}	8	14
11^{1-9}	7	12
$11^{27b-29b}$	8	14
$11^{30b, 31}$	8	14
12^{1-8}	8	14
13^{2}	8	15
13^{5-18}	8	15
18^{1-11a}	9	16
18^{12-14}	9	16
18^{16}	10	17
18^{20-32}	10	17
19^{1-28}	10	18
19^{30}	10	20
$19^{37, 38}$	10	20
21^{1-8}	11	20
21^{9}	11	20
21^{8-21}	11	21
22^{1-19}	12	22
24^{1-41}	13	23
24^{42b-67}	13	28
25^{5}	13	28
25^{8}	13	28
25^{11b}	13	28
$25^{21a, b}$	14	29
25^{24-34}	14	29
27^{1-40}	15	29
27^{41-45}	16	33
28^{10-13}	16	33
28^{15-22}	16	33
29^{1}–30^{1}	17	34
30^{22-24}	17	36
30^{25}–31^{2}	18	37
$31^{17, 18a}$	18	38
31^{19-21}	18	38
32^{3-11}	19	39
32^{13b-32}	19	39
33^{1-16}	20	41
35^{1}	20	42
35^{6}	20	42
35^{16-20}	20	42
37^{1}	21	43
37^{2b-27}	21	43
37^{28b}	21	43
37^{31-35}	21	45
39^{1-22}	22	45
40	23	47
41^{1-36}	24	49
41^{37-57}	25	51
42^{1-26}	26	53
42^{29-38}	26	54
43^{1}–44^{13}	27	55
44^{14-34}	28	59
45	29	61
46^{1-5}	30	63
46^{28-34}	30	63
47^{1-12}	30	64
47^{27}	30	65
47^{29-31}	31	65
48^{2b}	31	65
48^{9b}	31	65
48^{13-21}	31	65
49^{33b}–50^{14}	31	65
50^{15-26}	32	67

EXODUS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1^{6-14a}	33	69
1^{22}	33	69
2^{1-22}	33	69
2^{23}	34	71
3^{1-8a}	34	71
3^{9-14}	34	72
$3^{16, 17a, c}$	34	72
3^{18-20}	34	73
4^{10-16a}	34	73
4^{18}	34	73
4^{27-30a}	35	73
4^{31}	35	74
5^{1}–6^{1}	35	74
$7^{14, 15a}$	36	76
7^{16-18}	36	76
7^{20b}	36	76
7^{21a}	36	76
$7^{24, 25}$	36	76
8^{1-6}	36	76
8^{8-15}	36	77
8^{20-25a}	36	78
8^{28b-32}	36	78
9^{1-7}	37	79
9^{13}	37	79
$9^{17, 18}$	37	79
9^{28b-30}	37	79
$9^{33, 34}$	37	80
10^{3-5}	37	80
10^{11b}	37	80
10^{18-20}	37	80
10^{21-29}	38	81
11^{4-8}	38	82
12^{1-9a}	39	82
12^{10-16}	39	83
12^{21-24}	39	83
12^{26-28}	39	84
12^{29-34}	40	84
12^{37-39}	40	85
13^{17-22}	40	85
14^{5-8}	40	85
14^{10-14}	40	86
14^{19-21c}	40	86
14^{23-28}	40	86
$14^{30, 31}$	40	87
15^{1-11b}	41	88
$15^{20, 21}$	41	87
15^{22a}	42	89
15^{27}	42	89
16^{1a}	42	89
16^{2-7}	45	94
16^{13-15}	45	95
16^{21}	45	95
$16^{27, 28}$	45	95
$16^{30, 31}$	45	95
16^{35a}	45	95
17^{1b}	42	89
17^{2-7}	45	95
18^{1}	43	92
18^{5}	43	92
18^{7-9}	43	92
18^{12-27}	43	93
19^{2-6a}	42	89
19^{7-11}	42	89
19^{16-18}	42	90
20^{1-17}	42	90
21^{28-31}	148	326
$21^{33, 34}$	148	326
22^{1-3b}	148	326
22^{15}	148	327
22^{21-27a}	149	327
23^{1-3}	150	328
$23^{4, 5}$	149	328
23^{6-8}	150	328
23^{10-12}	149	328
25^{1}	43	91
25^{8}	43	91
33^{7-11}	43	92
34^{27}	42	91
35^{21}	43	91
$36^{2, 3a}$	43	91
36^{3a}	43	92

LEVITICUS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
6^{2-5}	156	335
$19^{11b, 12a}$	157	335
19^{13a}	157	335
19^{14a}	157	335
$19^{15b-16b}$	157	335
19^{17-18b}	157	336
19^{32a}	157	336
$19^{33, 34a}$	157	336
$19^{35, 36a}$	156	335

NUMBERS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
6^{22-25}	46	97
$11^{16, 17}$	46	97
11^{24b-29}	46	97
13^{17-20}	47	98
13^{22-24}	47	98
13^{26b-33}	47	98
14^{1b}	47	99
14^{2-9}	47	99
14^{11-24}	48	100
14^{31-33a}	48	101
20^{14-22a}	49	101

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
21^{4b-9}	49	102
21^{11b-13}	49	102
21^{14-18c}	49	103
21^{21-29}	50	103
21^{31}	50	104
22^{2b-7}	51	104
$22^{17, 18}$	51	105
22^{21b-35}	51	105
22^{36-39a}	52	106
23^{28}	52	106
24^{1-19}	52	106
$32^{21, 2}$	53	108
32^{5-8}	53	108
32^{16-27}	53	109
32^{30-41}	50	104

DEUTERONOMY

1^{1a}	54	110
1^{32}	47	100
$6^{4, 5}$	151	330
6^{4-9}	153	331
6^{20-25}	153	332
8^{2-15}	54	110
8^{17-20}	54	111
10^{14-18}	151	330
$10^{18b, 19}$	155	333
11^{1}	151	330
11^{10-12}	54	112
15^{7-11}	155	334
15^{12-15}	154	333
$16^{1, 2}$	152	330
16^{4a}	152	331
16^{6b}	152	331
16^{8-11}	152	331
16^{13-15}	152	331
$16^{16, 17}$	152	330
$23^{15, 16}$	154	333
$23^{19, 20}$	155	334
24^{6}	154	332
$24^{10, 11}$	154	332
$24^{14, 15}$	154	332
$24^{17, 18}$	154	333
24^{19-22}	155	333
28^{1}	54	111
28^{2-13}	54	111
31^{1-8}	55	113
34^{1-10}	55	113

JOSHUA

$1^{1, 2}$	56	115
1^{5-7}	56	115
1^{9-13}	56	115
2	56	115
3^{1}	57	117
3^{5}	57	117
3^{9b}	57	117
3^{10b}	57	117
3^{11}	57	117
3^{13-17}	57	117
4^{1}	57	118
4^{2}	57	118
4^{6-8}	57	118
4^{18b}	57	119
6^{1-3}	58	119
6^{5c}	58	119
6^{7}	58	119
$6^{10b, 11}$	58	119
6^{14-17}	58	119
$6^{20a, c}$	58	120
6^{21}	58	120
6^{25}	58	120

JUDGES

1^{16a}	59	121
1^{19}	59	121
1^{23-25}	59	121
1^{27}	59	121
1^{29-32}	59	121
3^{5a}	59	122
3^{6}	59	122
3^{13}	59	122
3^{15a}	59	122
4^{1}	59	122
4^{15b-16}	59	122
$5^{1, 2}$	60	123
5^{4-7}	60	123
5^{9-13}	60	124
$5^{14c-31b}$	60	124
$6^{2, 3a}$	61	126
$6^{4b, 5a}$	61	126
6^{6}	61	126
6^{11-24}	61	126
$6^{34, 35}$	61	128
7^{2-8a}	61	128
7^{16-21}	61	129
8^{4-10a}	61	128
8^{11}	61	129
8^{12-27a}	61	130
8^{30-32}	61	131
9^{1-23}	62	131
9^{25-28a}	62	133
9^{29}	62	133
$9^{39, 40}$	62	133
9^{45}	62	133
9^{50-56}	62	133

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
11^{1a}	63	134
11^{3-11a}	63	134
11^{30-32}	63	135
11^{34-40}	63	135
13^{2-5a}	64	136
13^{24}	64	136
14^{1-3}	64	136
14^{5-20}	64	136
15^{1-16}	65	138
16^{4-21a}	66	140
17^{1-3b}	67	143
17^{4-7a}	67	143
17^{8-13}	67	143
18^{1b}	67	143
18^{2-9}	67	144
18^{11}	67	144
18^{13-31a}	67	144

RUTH

1	68	147
2	69	148
3	70	151

I SAMUEL

1^{1a}	71	155
1^{2-24a}	71	155
2^{1-10}	71	157
2^{11}	72	158
2^{12}	72	158
2^{17b}	72	158
2^{18-21}	72	158
2^{22a}	72	158
2^{22-25c}	72	159
2^{26}	72	159
3^{1-13}	72	159
3^{15-19}	72	160
4^{1b-4a}	73	160
4^{5-7}	73	161
$4^{8b, 10}$	73	161
4^{12-14}	73	161
4^{16-18a}	73	161
5^{2-4}	73	161
5^{6-11a}	73	162
6^{2-5}	73	162
6^{7-10a}	73	163
6^{12-16}	73	163
6^{18}	73	163
$6^{21-7:1}$	73	163
8^{1}	74	164
8^{3-7}	74	164
8^{9-22a}	74	164
$9^{1a, c}$	75	164
9^{2-8}	75	165
9^{16-27}	75	166
10^{1-7}	75	168
10^{9}	75	168
10^{24-16}	75	168
11^{1-7}	76	168
11^{9-11}	76	169
11^{15}	76	170
$13^{2, 3a}$	77	170
13^{6-7a}	77	170
13^{15b-18}	77	171
13^{20}	77	171
$14^{1, 2}$	77	171
14^{3b-15}	77	171
14^{16-40}	78	172
14^{36-46}	78	174
$14^{47, 48}$	79	176
14^{52}	79	176
16^{14-23}	79	176
17^{1-11}	80	177
17^{32-40}	80	178
17^{43-49}	80	178
$17^{51, 52}$	80	179
18^{6-9}	81	179
18^{12a}	81	180
18^{13-16}	81	180
$18^{20, 21a}$	81	180
18^{22-25b}	81	180
18^{27a}	81	180
18^{27c}	81	180
$18^{28, 29}$	81	181
19^{1}	81	181
19^{4-17}	81	181
20^{1b-10}	82	182
20^{12-30}	82	183
20^{42b}	82	185
21^{1-4a}	83	185
21^{6-9}	83	185
$22^{1, 2}$	83	186
22^{6-19}	83	186
22^{20-23}	83	187
23^{1-14a}	84	188
25^{1b-42}	85	191
26	84	189
27^{1-10}	86	195
27^{12}	86	195
$28^{1, 2}$	86	196
28^{3-16}	87	199
28^{17b}	87	200
28^{19b-25}	87	200
29	86	195
$30^{1, 2}$	86	197
30^{4}	86	197

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
30^{9}	86	197
30^{9a}	86	197
30^{11}	86	197
30^{18-19a}	86	198
$30^{20,\ 21a}$	86	198
30^{22-26}	86	198
31	88	201

II SAMUEL

1^{1-4}	89	203
$1^{11,\ 12}$	89	203
1^{17}	89	203
1^{19-27}	89	203
2^{1-9}	90	204
2^{18b}	90	205
3^{1}	90	205
$4^{5,\ 6b}$	90	205
5^{1-5}	90	205
$5^{6,\ 7a}$	91	207
5^{9-12}	91	207
5^{17}	91	206
5^{18-20a}	91	206
5^{22-25}	91	206
6^{1-7}	92	207
6^{9-15}	92	208
6^{17-19}	92	208
7^{4b}	92	209
$7^{8,\ 9}$	92	209
7^{12}	92	209
7^{14-16}	92	209
8^{2}	94	210
8^{16a}	94	210
9	93	209
10^{1-16}	94	210
11^{1}	94	212
11^{2-22}	95	212
11^{25-27a}	95	214
11^{27b}	96	214
12^{1-10}	96	214
$12^{18-24a,\ c}$	96	215
12^{26-31b}	94	212
15^{1-7}	97	217
15^{9-15}	97	217
15^{17-26}	97	218
$15^{29,\ 30}$	97	219
17^{22b}	97	219
17^{24a}	97	219
17^{24b}	98	219
18^{1-14}	98	219
18^{21}	98	220
18^{24a}	98	220
18^{31}–19^{4}	98	220
23^{10-17}	91	206

I KINGS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1^{1a}	99	222
1^{8-18}	99	222
1^{20-41a}	99	223
1^{49-53}	99	224
2^{10}	99	225
2^{12}	99	225
3^{4-6a}	100	225
3^{7}	100	225
3^{9-12a}	100	225
3^{13a}	100	225
3^{15a}	100	226
3^{16-28}	100	226
4^{7}	103	231
6^{1b-8}	101	227
6^{9}	101	227
6^{10}	101	227
6^{15-20a}	101	227
6^{22a}	101	228
6^{22b-24}	101	228
6^{26}	101	228
$6^{27,\ 28}$	101	228
7^{1}	103	230
7^{7-11}	103	230
$8^{1a,\ c}$	102	228
8^{2a}	102	228
$8^{3,\ 4}$	102	228
8^{10-13}	102	228
8^{22-24a}	102	229
8^{27-30}	102	229
8^{37-43}	102	229
9^{26-28}	103	231
10^{1-10}	103	231
$10^{11,\ 12}$	103	231
10^{26}	103	231
11^{1a}	104	232
$11^{3,\ 4a}$	104	232
11^{7}	104	232
$11^{23,\ 24a,\ c}$	104	232
11^{28a}	104	232
11^{26-32a}	104	233
11^{40}	104	233
11^{43}	105	234
12^{1}	105	234
12^{2}	105	234
12^{9b-15a}	105	234
12^{16-20}	105	235
$16^{23,\ 24}$	106	235
16^{28}	106	236
16^{30}	106	236
$16^{31b,\ 32}$	106	236
17	106	236
18^{1-12}	107	238

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
18^{15-46}	107	239
19^{1-9}	108	241
19^{11b-21}	108	242
20^{1-21}	110	245
20^{22-40}	110	247
21^{1-20a}	109	243
21^{23}	109	245
21^{27}	109	245
22^{1-30a}	111	248
$22^{29, 30a}$	111	250
22^{34-37}	111	250

II KINGS

2^{1-12a}	112	252
4^{8-37}	113	253
5^{1-17}	114	255
5^{19-27}	114	257
6^{8-22}	115	258
6^{24-30}	116	260
6^{32a}	116	260
6^{33}	116	260
7^{1-16}	116	260
8^{28}	118	265
8^{29b}	118	265
9^{1-6}	117	263
$9^{16b-18a}$	117	263
$9^{17-21a, c}$	117	264
9^{22a}	117	264
9^{23a}	117	264
9^{24-26}	117	264
9^{27}	118	266
9^{30-37}	117	265
10^{28}	119	267
11^{1-5}	118	265
11^{9b-9a}	118	266
11^{12-18}	118	266
13^{3a}	119	267
13^{3-5}	119	267
13^{7}	119	267
13^{9}	119	268
13^{14-20a}	119	268
13^{23}	119	268
14^{16}	120	269
14^{18}	120	269
14^{20}	120	269
15^{1}	121	270
15^{2b}	121	270
15^{5}	121	270
15^{10}	120	269
$15^{12b, 16}$	120	269
15^{17b}	120	269
$15^{19, 20}$	120	269
15^{22}	120	269
$15^{26a, c}$	120	269
15^{27b}	120	269
$15^{29, 30a}$	120	269
16^{1-11a}	121	270
16^{12-14}	121	271
16^{18b}	121	272
16^{20}	121	272
17^{1b}	120	270
$17^{3, 4}$	120	270
17^{6b}	120	270
17^{24}	120	270
$18^{1, 2a}$	122	272
$18^{4a, b}$	122	272
18^{9}	122	272
18^{9b-11}	120	270
18^{13-15}	122	272
18^{17-20}	122	272
$18^{26, 27}$	122	273
19^{1-7}	122	273
19^{35-37}	122	274
20^{21}	123	274
21^{1b}	123	274
21^{2-6}	123	274
21^{10-13}	123	275
21^{16a}	123	275
21^{18}	123	275
$21^{19b, 20}$	123	275
$21^{23, 24}$	123	275
22^{1a}	124	276
22^{3-16}	124	276
22^{18}	124	277
$22^{19a, c}$	124	277
22^{20c}	124	277
$23^{1-3a, c}$	124	277
23^{4-8}	125	278
$23^{10, 11a, c}$	125	278
23^{12}	125	278
$23^{13a, c}$	125	279
23^{21-25}	125	279
$23^{29, 30}$	126	279
23^{33-35a}	126	280
24^{1a}	126	280
24^{1b}	126	280
24^{2a}	126	280
24^{6}	126	280
24^{7}	126	280
24^{8b}	126	280
24^{10-12a}	126	280
24^{13-17}	126	280
24^{18b}	126	281
24^{20b}–25^{12}	127	281
25^{27-30}	127	282

EZRA

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1^{2-6}	139	310
1^{11}	139	311
5^{1-6}	140	311
6^{1-15}	140	311

NEHEMIAH

1^{1-2a}	142	316
2^{9-16}	143	318
4^{1-3}	144	319
4^{6-23}	144	319
5	145	321
6^{1-19}	146	323
7^{1-3a}	147	324
7^{73b}	141	313
8^{1}	141	313
8^{2}	141	313
9^{1}	141	313
9^{2}	141	313
9^{9}	141	313
9^{26a}	141	313
9^{26}	141	313
9^{26b-33}	141	313
9^{36-38}	141	314
10^{29b}	141	314
10^{30-33}	141	314
$10^{34, 36}$	141	315
10^{37b}	141	315
10^{46b}	141	315
11^{1}	147	324
$12^{31, 32}$	147	325
12^{37-40}	147	325
$12^{42b, 43}$	147	325

ESTHER

$1^{9-10a, c}$	133	297
$1^{12, 13a}$	133	297
1^{15-22a}	133	298
2^{1-11}	134	298
$2^{14a, c}$	134	300
$2^{17, 18}$	134	300
2^{21-23}	135	300
3^{1-4}	135	300
3^{8-11}	135	301
3^{13}	135	301
3^{15b}	135	301
4	136	301
5	136	303
6	137	304
7	137	306
8^{1-6}	138	307
$8^{10, 11}$	138	307
8^{16-17}	138	308
$9^{2, 3}$	138	308
9^{17b}	138	308
9^{18b}	138	309
9^{19}	138	308
9^{26}	138	309
9^{26a}	138	309
9^{27}	138	309

JOB

1	357	566
2	357	568
3^{2-7}	358	570
$3^{10, 11}$	358	570
3^{12-15}	358	570
3^{17-20}	358	570
3^{23-25}	358	571
4^{1-7}	359	571
4^{12-19}	359	571
5^{17-26}	360	572
6^{1-6}	361	572
6^{8-18}	361	573
6^{21-30}	361	573
7^{1-6}	362	574
7^{9-18}	362	574
7^{20-22}	362	575
8^{1-13}	363	575
8^{20-22}	363	576
9^{1-7}	364	576
9^{13}	364	577
9^{15-35}	364	577
10^{1-16}	365	578
10^{20-22}	365	579
11^{1-9}	366	579
11^{13-19}	366	580
12^{1-3}	367	580
12^{13-16}	367	581
$12^{20, 21}$	367	581
13^{1-19}	367	581
13^{24-28}	367	582
14	368	583
15^{1-16}	369	585
15^{21}	369	586
15^{28}	369	586
16^{1-4}	370	586
16^{11-13a}	370	586
16^{15-21}	370	586
18^{1-12}	371	587
$18^{17, 18}$	371	587
19^{1-9}	372	588
19^{23-26}	372	588
19^{19-27b}	372	588
20^{4-5}	373	589
20^{9}	373	589

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
20^{37}	373	589
20^{39}	373	589
21^{1-4}	374	590
21^{7-9}	374	590
$21^{11, 12}$	374	590
21^{14-17b}	374	590
21^{23-26}	374	590
21^{29-34}	374	591
22^{1-11}	375	592
22^{13-15}	375	592
22^{22}	375	593
22^{23}	375	593
$22^{28, 29}$	375	593
23^{1-13}	376	593
23^{15-17}	376	594
24^{1-3}	376	594
25^{1-6}	377	594
27^{1-12}	378	594
28	379	595
29^{1-17}	380	597
$29^{21, 22}$	380	598
30^{9}	380	598
30^{20-22}	380	598
30^{24-26}	380	598
31^{5-25}	381	598
31^{29-34}	381	600
31^{36-37}	381	600
31^{38-40}	381	600
$32^{2a, e}$	382	601
32^{3}	382	601
$32^{9a, e}$	382	601
32^{7-12}	382	601
$32^{15, 16}$	382	601
32^{20}	382	602
33^{1}	382	602
33^{4}	382	602
$33^{5, 6}$	382	602
33^{7}	382	602
33^{12-25}	382	602
36^{15-17}	382	603
36^{19}	382	603
37^{2-4}	382	603
38	383	604
40^{2}	383	607
40^{2-6}	384	607
40^{2-14}	383	607
42^{2-6}	384	607

PSALMS

1	301	515
2	257	470
4	288	500
6	287	500

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
8	267	480
15	302	515
$16^{1, 2}$	283	497
16^{5-11}	283	497
18^{1-7}	256	469
18^{16-30}	256	469
19	268	480
22	290	502
23	285	498
24	247	461
25^{1-21}	278	492
27^{1-6}	291	504
29	269	482
30	293	506
31^{1-8}	292	505
31^{14-16}	292	505
31^{19-24}	292	506
32	303	516
33^{12-22}	258	471
34	259	472
36^{5-12}	273	487
37^{1-11}	304	517
37^{16-36}	304	517
40^{1-11}	284	497
42	277	491
43	277	492
46	279	493
48	261	474
$49^{5, 16}$	305	518
51^{1-17}	299	511
61	294	507
62	280	494
63^{1-8}	281	495
65	270	482
67	295	508
72	296	508
73^{1-26}	306	519
84	262	475
85	297	510
86	289	501
$89^{1, 2}$	270	483
89^{5-16}	270	484
90	300	513
91	312	524
92	252	465
93	248	462
95	249	462
96	250	463
97	251	464
100	263	476
101	307	521
103	274	487
104	272	484
107^{1-32}	253	466

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
113	254	467
116	264	477
119[1-18]	308	521
119[88-96]	308	522
119[105]	308	522
119[114]	308	522
119[129, 130]	308	522
119[137]	308	523
119[165]	308	523
121	286	499
122	298	511
125[1, 2]	311	524
127	309	523
128	311	524
130	276	490
133	311	524
138	255	468
139[1-18]	275	489
139[23, 24]	275	490
144[12-15]	310	523
145	260	473
146	282	496
148	265	478
150	266	479

PROVERBS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1[2-6]	313	526
1[7]	322	535
1[8, 9]	327	539
2[1, 2]	316	529
2[4, 5]	316	529
2[6-8]	318	533
2[10-14]	316	529
3[3, 4]	347	556
3[5-10]	322	535
3[11, 12]	324	537
3[13-18]	316	530
3[19, 20]	317	531
3[23, 24]	316	530
3[27, 28]	330	542
3[30, 34]	318	532
3[35]	323	536
4[10-12]	325	538
4[13]	324	537
4[23]	344	554
4[24]	345	554
4[25-27]	341	551
5[3-13]	342	552
6[1-5]	336	548
6[6-9]	332	544
6[12-15]	345	555
6[16-19]	317	532
6[27, 28]	342	553
6[32, 33]	342	553
8[1]	313	526
8[2-6]	313	526
8[9-11]	313	526
8[14-21]	313	527
8[22-36]	314	527
9[1-6]	315	528
9[8]	324	537
9[11]	315	529
9[13-18]	315	529
10[2]	334	545
10[3]	318	532
10[4]	331	543
10[5]	331	543
10[6, 7]	321	534
10[8]	321	534
10[12]	347	556
10[17]	327	539
10[22]	333	545
10[28]	323	536
10[27]	318	532
11[1]	317	531
11[2]	344	554
11[3]	321	534
11[6]	344	554
11[10, 11]	338	549
11[14]	338	549
11[20]	317	532
11[22]	323	536
11[24]	333	545
11[25]	330	542
11[28]	334	545
11[29]	323	536
12[4]	328	540
12[10]	347	556
12[15]	324	536
12[16]	343	553
12[17]	335	547
12[19]	345	554
12[22]	317	532
12[23]	319	533
13[11]	333	545
13[12]	319	533
13[15]	325	537
13[18]	332	544
13[20]	329	542
13[21]	321	534
14[1]	323	536
14[10]	319	533
14[13]	319	533
14[17]	343	553
14[21]	330	542
14[22]	333	545
14[24]	338	548
14[25]	335	547

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
14^{29}	343	553
14^{30}	319	534
14^{31}	347	556
14^{32}	321	534
15^{1}	343	553
15^{2}	325	537
15^{3}	317	531
15^{6}	324	537
15^{7}	324	536
15^{8}	317	532
15^{9}	317	531
15^{11}	317	531
15^{13}	319	534
15^{16}	334	546
15^{17}	347	556
15^{19}	331	543
15^{20}	327	540
15^{21}	345	555
15^{22}	340	551
15^{27}	335	547
15^{30}	317	532
15^{32}	324	537
15^{33}	322	535
16^{3}	322	535
16^{9}	334	545
16^{12}	337	548
16^{16}	344	554
16^{19}	334	545
16^{20}	325	537
16^{24}	340	551
16^{26}	331	543
16^{31}	320	534
16^{32}	343	553
16^{34}	340	551
17^{1}	346	555
17^{6}	320	534
17^{9}	329	542
17^{13}	346	555
17^{14}	346	555
17^{17}	329	542
17^{22}	319	534
17^{24}	323	536
17^{25}	327	540
17^{26}	340	551
18^{7}	323	536
18^{10}	318	532
18^{12}	340	550
18^{14}	319	534
18^{24}	329	541
19^{3}	323	536
19^{4}	332	544
19^{5}	335	547
19^{8}	323	536
19^{11}	343	553

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
19^{16}	328	540
19^{17}	347	556
19^{20}	324	537
19^{21}	317	531
19^{24}	331	543
20^{1}	339	550
20^{3}	346	555
20^{5}	324	537
20^{6}	319	533
20^{7}	326	539
20^{13}	332	544
20^{17}	345	554
20^{20}	327	539
20^{22}	318	533
20^{27}	319	533
20^{29}	320	534
21^{2}	317	531
21^{3}	317	531
21^{6}	333	545
21^{13}	347	556
21^{17}	332	544
21^{22}	340	551
$21^{30, 31}$	317	531
22^{1}	334	545
22^{2}	317	531
22^{3}	341	551
22^{4}	333	545
22^{6}	326	539
22^{13}	318	532
22^{18}	331	543
22^{15}	326	539
22^{16}	332	544
$22^{22, 23}$	318	532
$22^{26, 27}$	336	547
22^{29}	331	544
$23^{4, 5}$	334	546
23^{6-8}	341	551
23^{12}	324	537
$23^{20, 21}$	332	544
23^{22}	327	539
23^{25}	327	540
23^{26-28}	342	552
23^{29-35}	339	550
24^{3-6}	325	538
24^{7}	323	536
$24^{15, 16}$	321	534
$24^{19, 20}$	321	534
24^{24-26}	335	547
$24^{28, 29}$	335	547
24^{30-34}	331	543
25^{6}	338	548
$25^{7a, b}$	338	548
25^{11}	340	551
25^{10}	339	550

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
25[21, 22]	347	556
25[25]	319	533
25[26]	341	552
25[27]	344	554
25[28]	343	553
26[13]	344	554
26[14, 15]	331	543
26[18, 19]	345	555
26[21]	346	555
26[27, 28]	345	554
27[1]	344	554
27[3]	344	554
27[5]	326	539
27[6]	329	541
27[9]	329	542
27[11]	327	540
27[15, 16]	328	540
27[17]	319	533
27[19]	319	533
27[22]	323	536
28[6]	334	545
28[7]	327	539
28[14]	341	551
28[19]	332	544
28[20]	333	545
28[21]	335	547
28[26]	345	555
28[34]	327	539
28[35]	322	535
29[1]	327	539
29[2]	337	548
29[3]	342	552
29[4]	337	548
29[9]	338	548
29[11]	343	553
29[12]	337	548
29[14]	337	548
29[20]	340	550
29[26]	317	531
30[6]	318	533
30[7-9]	334	546
31[3]	342	552
31[6, 9]	335	547
31[10-29]	328	540
31[19-29]	328	541

ECCLESIASTES

1[2-9]	348	557
1[13-15]	349	557
1[16]	349	558
2[1-11]	349	558
2[12a]	350	559
2[13-17]	350	559
2[18-25]	351	559
2[26b]	351	560
3[9-11]	352	560
3[14]	352	560
3[16]	352	560
3[18-4[6]]	352	560
5[10-20]	353	561
7[1-6]	356	564
7[8, 9]	356	565
9[9-10]	354	562
9[11]	352	560
9[17]–10[1]	356	565
11[1-6]	354	562
11[9a, c]	355	563
11[10]	355	563
12[1-8]	356	564
12[13b]	356	565
12[14]	356	565

SONG OF SONGS

1[9]–2[3]	242	457
2[8-14]	243	458
4[1-8b]	244	458
4[7]	244	459
4[9-12]	244	459
4[15]	244	459
5[10-16d]	245	459
8[6, 7]	246	460
8[11, 12]	246	460

ISAIAH

1[2-8]	180	370
1[10-12]	181	371
1[14-26]	181	371
2[6-8]	174	360
2[10]	174	360
2[11]	174	360
2[12-18]	174	360
2[19]	174	360
3[16b, 17]	174	361
3[24b-26]	174	361
4[1]	174	361
5[1-7]	172	357
5[8-16]	173	358
5[17-24]	173	359
5[26-30]	175	363
6[1-11]	171	356
7[2-8b]	176	364
7[9-17]	176	364
7[21-25]	176	365
8[1-8]	176	365
8[16-18]	176	366
9[2-7]	209	413

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
9^{8-21}	175	361
10^{1-4}	175	363
10^{2-9}	182	372
10^{12-15}	182	372
10^{24}	182	372
$10^{33, 34}$	182	372
11^{11-12}	210	414
$13^{4, 5a}$	212	415
13^{19-22}	212	416
14^{4b-15}	212	416
19^{21}	227	436
19^{22-25}	227	436
20^{1}	177	366
22^{2-4}	177	366
$26^{3, 4}$	213	417
26^{9}	213	417
26^{17-19}	213	417
28^{7-18}	178	367
30^{1-3}	179	368
30^{6-11}	179	368
30^{15-17}	179	369
31^{1-3}	179	169
32^{1-8}	211	415
32^{15-17}	211	415
33^{1-3}	214	418
33^{14-22}	214	418
40^{1-11}	215	419
40^{12-31}	216	420
41^{8-10}	217	422
42^{1-7}	217	423
42^{18-25}	218	423
43^{1-7}	218	424
43^{10-13}	219	425
44^{2b-5}	219	425
$45^{23, 24a}$	219	426
49^{1-13}	220	426
50^{4-10}	220	426
52^{1-12}	223	430
52^{13}–53^{9}	222	428
$53^{11c, 12}$	222	430
55	224	431
56^{1-8}	227	435
57^{14-21a}	228	436
58^{1-12}	229	437
60^{1-6}	225	433
60^{15-20}	225	433
61^{1-9}	226	434
62^{1-3}	226	435

JEREMIAH

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
$1^{1, 2}$	188	385
1^{4-19}	188	385
$2^{2b, 3}$	189	386
2^{5b-8}	189	386
2^{11-13}	189	387
$3^{12b-13b}$	189	388
$3^{19, 20a}$	189	387
$4^{11b, c}$	189	387
4^{12}	189	387
4^{16-18}	189	388
5^{1}	189	388
$6^{13, 14}$	189	388
7^{1-15}	190	388
8^{18-20}	194	394
$12^{1, 2}$	195	395
12^{5}	195	395
14^{7-9}	194	394
14^{19-21}	194	394
15^{15-21}	195	396
20^{7-10}	195	395
22^{13-19a}	192	391
$23^{9b, c}$	196	397
23^{11}	196	397
23^{17}	196	397
23^{21-29}	196	397
26^{6-24}	191	389
29^{1}	198	399
29^{3-14}	198	399
31^{2-6}	199	400
$31^{12, 13}$	199	400
31^{15b-20}	199	400
31^{27-34}	200	401
35^{1-4a}	197	398
35^{5-8a}	197	398
35^{11-13}	197	398
35^{16-17c}	197	398
$35^{18b, 19}$	197	398
36^{1-10a}	193	392
$36^{11, 12a, b}$	193	392
36^{13-26}	193	392
36^{32}	193	393

LAMENTATIONS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1^{1-8}	238	451
$1^{12, 13}$	238	452
3^{22-41}	241	455
4^{1-18}	239	452
5^{1-18}	240	454

EZEKIEL

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1^{1b}	201	403
1^{3b-14}	201	403
1^{22-28a}	201	404
2^{8}	202	404
$2^{8, 7}$	202	404
3^{14-21}	202	404

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
18^{1-9}	203	405
18^{20-22}	203	406
24^{15-27}	204	406
34^{1-6}	205	407
$34^{11b, 12}$	205	408
34^{13b}	205	408
34^{14b-16}	205	408
$34^{22, 24}$	205	408
34^{25b}	205	408
34^{26}	205	408
37^{1-14}	206	408

DANIEL

1	128	283
2^{1-26}	129	284
2^{31-45}	129	287
3	130	289
5^{1-11a}	131	292
$5^{12b-31a}$	131	293
6^{1-18a}	132	294
6^{19-24}	132	296

HOSEA

1^{2b}	165	348
1^{3b-6}	165	348
$1^{8, 9}$	165	348
$2^{2, 3}$	165	348
$2^{4, 5a, b}$	165	348
$2^{2, 3}$	166	349
2^{5c-7c}	166	349
2^{8a-c}	166	349
2^{9-11}	166	349
2^{13-23}	166	350
3^{1-3}	165	348
4^{1-5b}	167	351
4^{6-12}	167	351
5^{15}	167	352
6^{6}	167	352
7^{8}	168	352
7^{11-14a}	168	352
8^{4}	168	353
$8^{7, 8a}$	168	353
9^{6-7c}	168	353
11^{1-9}	169	353
14^{1-9}	170	354

JOEL

$2^{12, 13}$	234	444
2^{26-29}	234	444

AMOS

1^{3-8}	158	337
1^{13-15}	158	338
2^{9-16}	158	338
3^{1a}	159	339
3^{7-8}	159	339
$3^{9}-4^{3}$	160	340
5^{6-15}	161	341
5^{18-24}	161	342
6^{1}	162	342
6^{4-7}	162	342
6^{12-14}	162	343
7	163	343
$8^{1, 2}$	164	345
$8^{4, 5}$	164	345
8^{7}	164	345
8^{9c-12}	164	345
9^{1-4}	164	346
$9^{7, 8a, b}$	164	347

JONAH

$1^{1}-2^{1}$	235	445
2^{10}	235	446
3	236	446
4	236	447

MICAH

$1^{1a, c}$	183	374
1^{2-12}	183	374
2^{1-4}	184	376
2^{6-11}	184	376
3^{1b-12}	184	376
4^{1-4}	185	378
5^{2}	185	379
5^{4}	185	379
6^{6-8}	184	378

NAHUM

1^{1a}	187	382
2^{1}	187	382
2^{3-6}	187	382
2^{8}	187	382
2^{10-13}	187	382
3^{1-3}	187	383
3^{5-13}	187	383
$3^{18, 19}$	187	384

HABAKKUK

$1^{12a, b}$	207	410
1^{13-15b}	207	410
1^{17}	207	410
2^{1-4}	207	410
2^{6c-8b}	207	410
2^{9-12}	207	411
2^{13b}	207	411
$2^{15, 16}$	207	411

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
9^{8-21}	175	361
10^{1-4}	175	363
10^{8-9}	182	372
10^{12-15}	182	372
10^{24}	182	372
$10^{23,\ 24}$	182	372
11^{1-12}	210	414
$13^{4,\ 5a}$	212	415
13^{19-22}	212	416
14^{4b-15}	212	416
19^{21}	227	436
19^{23-25}	227	436
20^{1}	177	366
22^{2-6}	177	366
$26^{3,\ 4}$	213	417
26^{5}	213	417
26^{17-19}	213	417
28^{7-18}	178	367
30^{1-3}	179	368
30^{6-11}	179	368
30^{15-17}	179	369
31^{1-3}	179	169
32^{1-3}	211	415
32^{15-17}	211	415
33^{1-3}	214	418
33^{14-22}	214	418
40^{1-11}	215	419
40^{12-31}	216	420
41^{8-10}	217	422
42^{1-7}	217	423
42^{18-25}	218	423
43^{1-7}	218	424
43^{16-18}	219	425
44^{2b-5}	219	425
$45^{23,\ 24a}$	219	426
49^{1-13}	220	426
50^{4-10}	220	426
52^{1-12}	223	430
52^{13}–53^{9}	222	428
$53^{11c,\ 12}$	222	430
55	224	431
56^{1-8}	227	435
57^{14-21a}	228	436
58^{1-12}	229	437
60^{1-6}	225	433
60^{15-20}	225	433
61^{1-9}	226	434
62^{1-3}	226	435

JEREMIAH

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
$1^{1,\ 2}$	188	385
1^{4-19}	188	385
$2^{2b,\ 3}$	189	386
2^{5b-8}	189	386
2^{11-13}	189	387
$3^{12b-13b}$	189	388
$3^{19,\ 20a}$	189	387
$4^{11b,\ c}$	189	387
4^{19}	189	387
4^{16-18}	189	388
5^{1}	189	388
$6^{13,\ 14}$	189	388
7^{1-15}	190	388
8^{18-20}	194	394
$12^{1,\ 2}$	195	395
12^{5}	195	395
14^{7-9}	194	394
14^{19-21}	194	394
15^{15-21}	195	396
20^{7-10}	195	395
22^{13-19a}	192	391
$23^{9b,\ c}$	196	397
23^{11}	196	397
23^{17}	196	397
23^{21-29}	196	397
26^{6-24}	191	389
29^{1}	198	399
29^{8-14}	198	399
31^{2-6}	199	400
$31^{12,\ 13}$	199	400
31^{15b-20}	199	400
31^{27-34}	200	401
35^{1-4a}	197	398
35^{5-8a}	197	398
35^{11-13}	197	398
35^{16-17c}	197	398
$35^{18b,\ 19}$	197	398
36^{1-10a}	193	392
$36^{11,\ 12a,\ b}$	193	392
36^{13-26}	193	392
36^{32}	193	393

LAMENTATIONS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1^{1-8}	238	451
$1^{12,\ 13}$	238	452
3^{22-41}	241	455
4^{1-18}	239	452
5^{1-18}	240	454

EZEKIEL

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
1^{1b}	201	403
1^{2b-14}	201	403
1^{22-28a}	201	404
2^{8}	202	404
$2^{9,\ 7}$	202	404
3^{14-21}	202	404

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
3^{3}	208	411
3^{8-13b}	208	411
3^{16-19}	208	412

ZEPHANIAH

1^{2-7}	186	380
$1^{10b-12a}$	186	380
1^{14-18}	186	381

ZECHARIAH

BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SEC.	PAGE
$9^{9, 10}$	230	439

MALACHI

2^{10}	231	440
2^{13-16}	231	440
$2^{17}-3^{4}$	232	440
$3^{10}-4^{3}$	233	441
$4^{5, 6}$	233	443